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THE

PARISH PASTOR.

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BY

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PREFACE.

It will not be supposed that I can have designed to treat, in these few pages, of *all* the qualifications or all the duties, of a Clergyman. That would require a large volume. But it appeared to me that it might be useful to offer some remarks and suggestions as to a few of the most important and not least difficult points of ministerial duty; namely, what may be called *domestic* ministrations, *explanations* of the *Bible*, of the *Prayer-Book*, and of the two *Sacraments*, and the inculcation of christian *Morality*.

If I have in any degree succeeded in my object, I may hope that through the divine blessing some parts of this little Work may prove useful to the Laity as well as to the Clergy. For, it should not be forgotten that whatever it is the duty of the Minis-

ter to *teach*, it must be the duty of the People to *learn*.

The greater part of the substance of the following pages has already appeared in separate Publications; some of which are nearly, if not entirely, out of print. It has therefore been thought advisable to collect, revise, and re-arrange them.

I do not address myself to those members of our Church—if there are any such—whose adherence to it is merely from custom, or for personal convenience, or pecuniary advantage; but to those whose attachment to it is deliberate and sincere. And these I would caution not to allow themselves to be misled by some who (chiefly perhaps from indistinctness of thought) are accustomed to confound together two things that are quite distinct; namely, what is allowable, or a duty, or an important duty, for *every* man, and what is such to a *member* of a certain *Community*.

The distinction is plainly perceived by most persons, in all secular matters. For

instance, it is well understood that a citizen of the *British* Empire owes *allegiance to the Sovereign;* though he is not bound to condemn all Republics, and to maintain that regal government is essential to every civilized State. The laws of *our* Country, WE are bound in duty to obey; though we need not disapprove the very different laws of some other Countries. But in all that pertains to religion, the distinction is often overlooked. If any one urges, on members of our Church, the duty of complying with its regulations that are not contrary to Scripture, he will perhaps be told in answer, that "such and such regulations are not *essential to the Gospel-scheme.* If he objects to something that is at variance with the system of our Church, he will perhaps be answered that it is *not forbidden in Scripture.* And if he maintains the duty, in an Episcopalian Church, of submitting to episcopal rule, he will perhaps be considered as one of those narrow-minded Churchmen who would exclude from the Universal

Church of Christ, all who are not under a system of Episcopacy.

But surely the most scrupulous fulfilment of our own obligations does not necessarily imply bigoted intolerance. We may have a hearty and zealous attachment to our own Church, without passing uncharitable censure on others. And this hearty zeal should be even the *more* conspicuously manifested by the Clergy and by the Laity of an *endowed* Church, in order to guard against the suspicion that their adherence to it is mainly from a regard to the personal advantages they derive from that endowment.

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THE PARISH PASTOR.

LECTURE I.

THE PAROCHIAL SYSTEM.

Distinct Branches of Ministerial Duty.

§ 1. THERE are, in the Ordination-Service (a Service which should be frequently and attentively perused, by the Members, and especially the Clergy, of our Church), distinct, though brief, references to the several parts of the ministerial duty;—to the administration of the Sacraments,—the public instruction of the People out of Scripture,—and also the private Visitation of individuals.

The candidate for Holy Orders is called upon publicly to pledge himself, first, to "instruct out of the Scriptures, the people committed to his charge;" and next, "faithfully to minister the doctrine and Sacraments and the disci-

pline of the Church, and to teach the people under his charge to keep and observe the same." And afterwards he is required to engage to use "private, as well as public monitions and exhortations, both to the sick and the whole, within his cure, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given."

In addition therefore to the duties of public Ministration, there is a distinct head mentioned of private Ministration also.

Pastoral care of a Parish.

§ 2. And this, comparatively inconspicuous, but certainly not least important branch of Ministerial duty, belongs most especially to what may be called the *Parochial System* of our Church. If public preaching, and the administering of the Sacraments, were all that was needed, there would be no necessity for dividing a christian Country into any such districts as we call Parishes, and confiding each to the superintending care of its own Pastor. It would be only needful to provide a sufficient number of

places of Worship, and of Preachers; leaving those preachers to make whatever arrangements among themselves might suit their convenience. But our Church (and I believe I might say *every* christian Church) has felt, and practically recognised the need of something besides this; —of that private superintending care which is provided for by the parochial system. And such a system there can be, I think, no doubt, was established in the very earliest times. For (to omit other proofs) we may be sure that it could not have been of *mere preachers* that the Apostle is speaking when he exhorts Christians [1 Thess. v. 12] to "know them which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and admonish them; and to esteem them very highly for their work's sake:" and again [Heb. xiii. 17], to "Obey them that have the rule over them, and to submit themselves: for they watch for their souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief."

As for instituting any inquiry into the

comparative utility or dignity of the several branches of ministerial duty, this would then—and then only—be pertinent, if an *alternative* were before us;—if one, or else another, of these, must necessarily be neglected. But a conscientious man, who has several distinct duties imposed on him, will occupy himself, not in considering which of them deserves a preference, but, how he can best fulfil them *all*.

It may sometimes however be worth while to consider *which* of our duties we may be the most frequently tempted to neglect, by reason of its having less connexion with personal celebrity and popularity, and being of a less striking character, than others. And corresponding care is called for to guard against any such temptation.

I am not, of course, supposing the case of a man who makes human applause his idol, and who deliberately prefers the reputation of an eloquent preacher to the edification of his People, and the discharge of his duty. If there *were* any one of such a character, he would not be likely to listen with profit to any admonitions

on the subject. But any one who, possessing the valuable gift of attractive and popular pulpit-eloquence, should take for granted that he cannot be in any danger of overrating the importance of this, and unduly depreciating, or partially overlooking, other branches of ministerial duty—such a one is, by his rash security, the most exposed to that danger.

Public instruction and exhortation from the Pulpit, I am so far from undervaluing, that I am fully sensible of an advantage, in some respects, which a discourse delivered to a *congregation*, possesses over private admonitions to an individual. It is well known that a multitude will often be more easily and more strongly impressed by anything that is forcibly said, than those same persons would have been by the very same words addressed to each of them singly. Mutual sympathy, and mutual consciousness of that sympathy, tend very greatly to heighten any kind of emotion that may have been excited. And thus a powerful effect is often produced on a large audience composed of persons no one of whom could have been equally influenced separately.

It should not be forgotten, however, that any sudden and very violent excitement, though it certainly does sometimes leave permanently good effects, yet will very often be succeeded (if not watched with judicious care—if the metal when heated be not duly moulded)—by a dangerous kind of *collapse*—a sort of reaction—which will more than undo any good that may have been done: "and the last state of that man will be worse than the first." A *torrent* (we should remember), however copious and rapid, is no *permanent* stream; its very name being taken from a word which denotes *parching* drought. And in the Parable of the Sower, the seed which fell on a rock, underwent what may be called a "new birth;" since it immediately sprang up; it was "converted" from a grain into a plant; but when the sun waxed hot it withered away.

Importance of private Ministrations.

§ 3. And there are also peculiar advantages on the side of private admonition. In private converse with an

individual, you perceive, and can accommodate yourself to his particular character and habits of thought, and can then supply just the kind of instruction or advice that especially suits that individual. You learn what are the particular difficulties or objections that most beset him; and again, the particular excuses by which each may have soothed his conscience; and which perhaps are what you would never have conjectured. The particular temptations to which one individual is most exposed, are often quite different from those of another man. And these you will best come to understand in private intercourse.

And I may add that you will thus best be able to increase the efficiency of your *public* ministrations. For, with a view to *them*, it is most important to ascertain what has or has not been clearly understood;—what may have been *mis*understood;—and how far any individual may have evaded the personal application to *himself* of something that had been said, and may have applied it solely to his neighbours. Often will the Minister who

makes such inquiries as he ought to make, be surprised at the result of them. He will often find that much of what he has said, and which had been listened to with reverence and with apparent attention, and had been received with ready assent, has been in part very imperfectly and indistinctly taken in, and in part grossly misapprehended.

Much intercourse with our fellow-men is essential to that knowledge of *Mankind* without which no one can be a profitable instructor of others. The solitary student will be likely to judge of the feelings and notions of others too much from his own; and will be misled by what Bacon calls "the Idols of the Den" [*idola specûs*]. And again, one who has had but little intercourse except with some *one class* of persons, will be the less qualified as an instructor of other, very different, classes.

Even with a view therefore to really profitable public preaching, private intercourse with the members of the congregation is highly important. For, no one can be completely well-fitted to be the instructor of any class of persons, who

has not had considerable private intercourse with individuals of that very class.

And the private intercourse of the Pastor with his People should not be confined to that which indeed could scarcely be with propriety called *intercourse;*—merely *speaking to* them on religious matters. He should also *listen* to them, and encourage them to open their minds freely to him; and that too, not on their spiritual concerns only, but on any others also on which they naturally and allowably feel much interest, and have a craving for sympathy. All detraction indeed, and criticism of their neighbours, should be repressed; but on concerns of their own, such as the prospects in life of themselves and their children, they should be listened to with friendly sympathy. And finding you take a kind interest in their temporal welfare, and that you do not look down on them with disdainful unconcern, they will the more readily communicate with you, and listen to you, on religious subjects. And it may be added that you

may in this way best bring them to understand that Religion is not to be reserved as a distinct occupation for one day in the week, but is to operate practically in the ordinary business of life.

And when you find any one holding any erroneous notions, you will find it best to *begin* by ascertaining what there is of *truth* in his views; since thus there will be some common ground for both parties to stand upon. And after dwelling on the points of *agreement*, you may then the better proceed to refute what is erroneous, and to convey more correct ideas.

It should be considered moreover, that the impression which may be produced by a public discourse, is sometimes more liable to be *transient*, and before long to fade away and be forgotten, than a similar impression made in private conference. A Sermon will perhaps have suggested to a man a doubt as to the correctness of his belief or his practice in some point;—he will have been strongly urged to adopt views at variance with his prejudices, or to act against his habitual

inclination,—and he feels perhaps that the reasons given are such as he is unable to answer. But then, there is *no one calling on him* to answer them;—no one pressing him either to express his conviction, and act accordingly, or else, to show sufficient cause for refusing. And he will be not unlikely, nor perhaps unwilling, to let the doubts or the convictions that have been produced, gradually pass away and leave no trace on his mind. He will perhaps say, virtually, to some argument with which he had been impressed at the moment, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

But in private conference, there is the reverse of this. A man is naturally and fairly called on to express his assent to what he cannot deny, and to acknowledge the obvious consequences of what he has distinctly admitted. And he must either convict himself of wilful and perverse inconsistency, or else must at least profess an intention of acting up to what he acknowledges to be true and right.

Important results of domestic Visiting.

§ 4. Accordingly, some important effects are occasionally produced in individuals by this kind of conversational intercourse, when they would have remained—perhaps *had* remained—practically unmoved by the most striking eloquence in public discourses.

Many probably could confirm what has been said, by instances coming under their own experience. Of those that have come under mine, I will mention one, and only one, as an illustration of the above remarks.

There was a parish (of moderate extent) under the care of a conscientious and zealous Minister, who had to lament, as to one point, the utter failure of his efforts. The Lord's Table was attended only by some six or eight persons, all members of one family. The rest of the congregation continued to absent themselves from the ordinance, notwithstanding his delivering sermon after sermon, filled with the most cogent reasons, and the most earnest exhortations. The People continued to attend at Church,

and listened (and perhaps listened with approbation) to the Sermons, as if to something not at all designed for *them*, but altogether for some different class of persons. Another Minister, to whom this state of things was known, succeeded to the charge of the parish; and he resolved to try another course of procedure. He went round to the several families of the Parishioners, giving instructions,—explanations,—reasons,—exhortations,—remonstrances,—according to what each case required. And the result was, that on the very next occasion of his celebrating the Lord's Supper, instead of six or eight, he had *above ninety* communicants.

In this instance there was an immediate and evident result; showing publicly, the utility of these private ministrations. But this is not what is to be ordinarily expected. It will oftener be found that the good effects—when any do result—will be gradual and slow, and, after all, but little noticed, and little known, except by a very few persons. You may be the means, under the divine blessing, of doing most important service to many

an individual, while scarcely any one except the parties immediately concerned is even at all aware of it. You may be enabled, in your private ministrations, to console the afflicted—to fortify the wavering—to convince the doubting—to reclaim the vicious—to correct the erroneous—to rouse the careless—and to reconcile those who are at variance; and yet these services may be but little known beyond a very small circle; and perhaps, even *when* known, not estimated very highly. If you faithfully and well discharge these duties, you will indeed obtain, besides the inestimable testimony of a good conscience, the approbation of the most judicious and worthiest men: but with most of the unwise and unthinking, far greater popularity will be gained by something more striking and splendid. There are men whom the Apostle Paul describes as "having itching ears:"—whom the Apostle James alludes to as being "hearers of the Word, and not doers:" whom he compares to a man "beholding his face in a mirror;" and whom Ezekiel, long before, had described

as listening to him as they would to one who "hath a very pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." For it is not merely in *their* times, but doubtless in *all* times, that such may be found;—persons who have a craving for the excitement of brilliant and impassioned eloquence, and care for little else; estimating each Minister entirely according to the degree in which he proves attractive to a congregation; and flattering themselves that they are making religious progress, because the oratory they delight in has a *reference* to Religion. Such a one may be compared to a cloth which has received a dye, but without the application of a *Mordant* to fix it, and whose colour, however brilliant, will easily be discharged.

Qualifications requisite for private Ministrations.

§ 5. But others, again, there are, who are aware of the utility and of the necessity of private pastoral superintendence, but regard this branch of ministerial duty as a very *humble* one; inferior in importance and far lower in point of dignity. But a rightly-conscien-

tious and faithful Pastor, who undertakes and who retains, the charge of a parish, will not allow any temptation so to draw him off from this duty, as to leave uncared for, those whose "souls he is bound to watch over, as one that must give an account."

And in truth, this branch of duty is not only highly important, but is also one which requires qualifications, different indeed, in kind, from those of the public Preacher, but not at all less valuable. Sound good sense, and discreet cautiousness, are most especially requisite in the Minister's private intercourse with his parishioners. And they are qualities which (in a high degree) are not more common, nor less needing assiduous cultivation, than brilliant eloquence.

And besides good sense and conscientious diligence, there will also be usually an especial call for *patience*, in this branch of ministerial duty. In dealing with numbers of persons of various dispositions, and many of them of untutored minds, many, and very various, trials of patience will be likely to arise. Some

persons, perhaps, will be inattentive even to the most judiciously offered instruction, or will even resent the kindest advice. Some will show no gratitude for the pains bestowed on them ; and some will be unreasonable in their demands on the Pastor's time and labour, or perhaps jealous of that which is bestowed on their neighbours. In all these ways, the patience of a diligent Pastor will often be greatly tried: though, on the other hand, he may hope often to meet with cheering encouragements.

It would be superfluous to enlarge on the evils that may ensue,—in all departments of duty, and not least in this that I am now alluding to—from indiscretion, or from impatience of temper. To be intrusively troublesome,—to interfere in an indelicate way in domestic concerns,—to rebuke with harshness,—to weary with admonitions those whose minds are preoccupied,—to assume an arrogant tone of dictation,—all these are faults which all must be well aware will render well-meant private ministrations more hurtful than beneficial. And I need hardly add,

that the dread of such evils ought not to tempt us to neglect this branch of duty, but to incite us to use the more care in guarding against any such errors.

Danger of overrating human Authority.

§ 6. But it may be worth while to suggest that care will sometimes be needed to guard against what may be reckoned an opposite danger. You will perhaps find that some of the best disposed of your flock are inclined to assign, not too little, but too much authority to their Pastor. Men are apt, in this matter, to be misled by a false analogy, between the Clerical profession on the one hand, and the Medical and Legal on the other. As a man places himself under the guidance of a physician, and of a legal-adviser, whom he thinks trustworthy in their respective departments, and implicitly relies on them, without setting up himself as a judge of the directions they give, and without undertaking the study of medical or legal science, so, many a one proceeds in a corresponding way, in what regards his religion. I have heard,

—as probably many others have,—a distinct avowal of this principle: but you will much more frequently find it acted on. If a Pastor is very assiduous, and is much beloved and admired, it will perhaps be found that many of his People place him (in their own minds)—not indeed distinctly and avowedly, but practically—almost on the same level with the inspired Apostles:—that they receive doctrines, in fact, on his word, and give an uninquiring and unhesitating assent to all he says, simply because said by him. And indeed I have myself known a Protestant Minister congratulate himself on finding this to be the case with several of his People; forgetting apparently that two-thirds of his parishioners, were, on the very same principle, adhering to a religious system (that of the Church of Rome), which he, and which I, considered erroneous and dangerous.

Now it is evidently an error to receive doctrines on human authority, even supposing all that is actually thus received to be in itself true. The Apostles, we know, received a direct supernatural re-

velation, attested by miraculous signs; and they,—very reasonably,—called on men to receive them as immediate messengers from Heaven. And our Lord taught,—as *He* had a right to do—"as one having authority, and not as the Scribes;" appealing to his "mighty works" as the proper proof of his pretensions. The Scribes in their teaching referred to the written Law; saying, "It is written so and so; and this or that appears to be the meaning." And thus, even if their expositions were in any point erroneous, their hearers had in their hands the means of correcting the error. Now it is evident that *we* are to teach as the Scribes, and not, like our Lord, as having independent authority. We must refer our hearers to Scripture and to Reason, for the establishment of what we say; unless we can exhibit those miracles which, we are expressly told, were "the signs of an Apostle."*

All this might seem too obvious to be

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* Signs, that is, attesting the claim of one who did claim to be an Apostle. For though others besides

at all liable to be overlooked. But experience shows that there is a danger of putting human authority too nearly on a level with divine. A large majority, as is well known, of professing Christians in the world, are members of Churches which distinctly claim infallibility; a claim which could never have been established, if men had not been predisposed to admit it. And in fact, there is, I believe, no one cause that has had so much effect in retaining, and in enlisting, adherents to the Church of Rome, as the craving after an infallible guide on earth, universally accessible, and competent to decide without the possibility of error, among all conflicting opinions, what is the right sense of Scripture, and what is the divine Will. And even where no claim to infallibility, under that very title, is either allowed or put forth, something very nearly amounting to the same, in reality, may often be met with. There is a

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the Apostles possessed miraculous powers, without making any such claim, those who did make it were bound to produce this infallible proof of their pretensions.

well-known christian Sect whose preachers distinctly profess to be "moved by the Holy Spirit" to say whatever they do say. And supposing this claim to be well established, all that they utter would be completely on a level with Holy Scripture. For, the very foundation of our confidence in *that*, as infallible, is, our belief that those we commonly call "the Inspired Writers" really were "moved by the Spirit" to say what they did. But then, any one who ventures thus to proclaim, with the voice of one of the Prophets of old, "thus saith the Lord," or "the Holy Spirit moveth me," may fairly be required to display "the miraculous *signs* of an Apostle," or else must stand convicted of impious presumption.

There are others, again, who though not using precisely this language, yet so express themselves as to be at least very likely to be understood in nearly the same sense. For instance, I remember seeing in some Publication, the description given by a preacher (I forget of what Denomination) of his addressing some persons, "not with enticing words of man's wis-

dom, but with demonstration of the Holy Ghost and of power." He was, apparently, so ignorant as not to know that the Apostle meant by "demonstration of the Holy Ghost and of power," the proof he exhibited of his divine commission by the display of *miraculous* powers conferred on him by the Holy Spirit. But there was clearly a claim,—or at least what would be understood as a claim,—to an inspiration equal to that of the Apostle. Again, a Minister of another Church,—whom I well knew personally,—a man of more than average learning and intelligence, declared to me his conviction that our Lord's admonition to his Apostles not to "take thought or premeditate what they should speak, for that it should be given them in the same hour what to say," was applicable to ourselves at this day, and one which we are authorized and bound to act on. Perhaps it did not occur to him, but it certainly would to most who heard him, that the very ground on which this admonition rested, was,—"it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost that speaketh in you."

But a Minister who is far from designedly putting forth for himself any such pretensions, may nevertheless find a tendency in some of his flock to fall into something of the error I have been alluding to, unless distinctly, and earnestly, and frequently, cautioned against it.

Distinction between inspired and uninspired Teachers.

§ 7. And in giving such cautions, it will be necessary to point out, and explain, and dwell upon, some important distinctions: what some perhaps will call nice and subtle distinctions, but which are indispensably requisite for a right faith. For instance, the Pastor cannot but believe the opinions which he puts forth in sincerity to be *true;* else they would not *be* his opinions. Yet he must not allow his People to adopt them on his authority. He cannot, again, but wish them to receive his doctrine; but he must refer them to Holy Scripture, and leave them to judge,—as the candid Bereans did of old—"whether those things are so." It is not enough that

they should hold what is in itself right, if they believe it on wrong grounds.

And, again, he cannot but believe, and must teach, that "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above," and that for whatever truth there may be in anything he teaches, he is bound to be thankful to the divine Giver. So he is also, for everything that is morally *good* in his *conduct;* for "the fruit of the Spirit is in all *righteousness*" as well as in all *truth;* and yet, as he cannot claim *sinless* perfection, so neither can he claim infallibility in doctrine. "If we say that we have no *sin*, we deceive ourselves;" and we should equally deceive ourselves if we should say that we have no *error*. The Pastor therefore must be careful to point out the distinction between himself and the Apostles, who received manifest and sensible divine inspiration; even when his doctrine, as well as theirs, may be true and entitled to belief. The truth of what *they* said was to be *inferred* from the instruction from above which they received; the sensible miracles which

they displayed being the proof of their divine commission. With a mere human teacher on the other hand—one who is (in the ordinary acceptation of the word) uninspired, the case is the opposite. Any enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit that may have been bestowed on him, is to be inferred *from the truth* of what he teaches; the proof of that truth being attested not by miracles wrought by him, but by an appeal to the Inspired Writers themselves. *They* claim assent on their own word, and he, on theirs. Now if any one is inclined to call this an over-nice and subtle distinction, he will do well to reflect whether it is not on this that the whole difference turns between being servants of God or of Man.

And it is important to point out to our people that in the New-Testament-history, every outpouring of the Spirit such as called on men to receive what was said as a message from Heaven, was always attested by undeniable miracles, not to be mistaken for imposture, or for the delusions of an excited state of feeling. The Disciples on the day of

Pentecost did not utter an unmeaning jargon and call that the Gift of Tongues, but spake languages which they had never learnt, but which were understood by the men of various nations whom they addressed, and recognised by them as "their own tongues wherein they were born." This sign, and the healing of the sick, and the raising of the dead, were the proofs given of a direct communication from the Most High. But there is no record of any such signs as shrieks, faintings, convulsions, and hysterical fits. All the *violent* manifestations that we read of, were what the Sacred Writers attributed to the agency of Evil Demons. But the manifestations of God's Holy Spirit seem to have been as *calm* as they were powerful.*

The cautions I have now been recommending have evidently a reference not only to private ministrations, but to public preaching also; and perhaps even

* When Paul was "struck down," it was by a miraculous light, which *was seen by his companions.* And they heard a voice speaking to him, though they did not distinguish the words. (See Acts ix. and xxii.

still more to this latter. For in private conference, any misapprehension that your hearer may fall into, you will be likely immediately to perceive, and can correct at once. But in a sermon, something said may be dangerously misapprehended, without the error's coming to your knowledge. Any one who has been accustomed to see or to hear reports of discourses which may have been delivered by himself, or which he has heard—discourses perhaps very clear in style and in delivery—will often be surprised at the misapprehensions afloat;—misapprehensions sometimes destroying, or even reversing the real sense of what was said.

Such misapprehensions we must guard against in all cases, as well as we can: but it is in private conference that they can the most easily be corrected.

Confession and Absolution.

§ 8. But there is one case in which the danger I have been alluding to has reference exclusively to the Pastor's private intercourse with his people; I mean, that of consultation as to cases of conscience,

and private confession of particular sins. Auricular confession, enjoined as an habitual and necessary duty, though it is felt as a grievous burden by many of those belonging to Churches which do enjoin it, is a burden which could never have been originally imposed on men without their own consent. And there can be no doubt, I think, that the practice must have grown up in consequence of men's craving for the relief of what is called *unburdening* the conscience, or (as it is sometimes styled) "making a clean breast." And one proof that might be given of this, is, that something nearly approaching to that system of particular confession has been introduced by a Protestant sect, which does not recognise priestly absolution.

If our Lord had bestowed on his Apostles and other Ministers the faculty of reading each man's heart, and foreseeing the future course of his life, they might thus have been enabled to pronounce positively of an individual that his sins were pardoned by the Most High, and his salvation secured. But this gift

He did not think fit to bestow on any one. His Disciples therefore were merely authorized to pronounce, not, what *particular individuals*, but what *kind* of persons should have remission of sin against God; namely, those whose penitence and faith were seen by *Him* to be sincere.

And even as the power conferred on the Disciples, "of binding and loosing," —*i. e.*, of enacting, altering, or repealing rules of conduct,—cannot extend to alterations in the essentials of the Gospel-scheme of salvation, or in the fundamental principles of morality, but only to church-regulations as to ceremonies, formularies, public worship, and religious festivals, even so, the remission of sins, as sins against God, can be proclaimed by Christ's Ministers, only as promised, *generally*, in Scripture, to the truly and rightly penitent.

But the power of remitting or retaining sins, has been, as you are aware, misunderstood as implying a power (one which neither the Apostles themselves, nor any other man can possess) of abso-

lutely pardoning sins as against God. He who does any wrong to his neighbour, and by the same act is guilty of an offence against the community he belongs to, and also of a sin against God, may be forgiven by his neighbour, for the wrong done to that neighbour; and may receive the pardon of the community for the offence done to *it;* but it is God alone that can forgive the sin against God. In fact, we are, all of us, not only authorized but bound to "forgive every man his brother their trespasses;" that is, trespasses as against ourselves. And it is a right not only conferred by our Lord on his Church, but necessarily inherent in every kind of Society, to inflict, retain, and remit, the censure of the Society, on any transgressor of its rules. But neither any individual man, nor any Society, can have a right to go further, and to pretend to forgive sins against the Most High.

This distinction, which men have often been found prone to overlook, and which some may call a subtle and nice distinction, is one which the Pastor is clearly

bound to point out and to explain, if he would guard his flock against most deadly error. And I cannot think that a man of good sense will find it very hard to be explained. A child may surely be brought to understand that though he may remit a debt due to *himself*, he cannot remit a debt due to another—to a third person; and that (by parity of reasoning) though *he* may pardon a wrong done to him, *no one else* can have power to pardon that wrong.

But be the distinction a subtle or an obvious one, and difficult or easy to be explained, some explanation of it the Pastor is bound to give, and to guard his people against attributing to him an authority which no man can possess.

Admission to the Eucharist.

§ 9. As for questions respecting the particular mode, and the degree, in which any Church ought to exercise, or does exercise, a power of remitting or retaining offences as against itself, on these I shall not now enter. But it is worth while to remark that

there is one point whereon our Church may be said to have delegated this power to her Ministers, and to exercise it through them. The Minister is authorized and bound to act according to the best of his knowledge and discretion in admitting to the *Eucharist* or excluding from it. In the general, public administration of the ordinance in the Church, he is to exclude those only who are "open and notorious evil-livers," or are in avowed enmity against their neighbours. But in the private visitation of the sick, cases will arise, and in populous parishes will be of no unfrequent occurrence, in which there will be a call for much anxious deliberation, and need of much sound discretion.

Suppose a man who has been, and confesses himself to have been, leading an utterly ungodly life, or to have committed some heinous crime, for which he might reasonably have been excluded from christian communion, to be alarmed at the probable near approach of death, and to send for the Minister to his sick bed, desiring to receive the Lord's Supper.

The Minister, when applied to, *must* say either "I will," or "I will not." If the applicant appear to be sincerely and rightly penitent, and in that suitable state of mind which is briefly described in our Church-Catechism (in answer to the question, "What is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper?) then he will administer the Rite; and in so doing he will have taken upon him to remit, on the part of the Church, that penalty of exclusion from the Lord's Table which the man's former life might be thought to have incurred. Whether he use, or not, the very word "*absolution*," he will have pronounced an absolution for the offences committed, *as* offences against the Church. And he may also express his strong hope and confident *belief* (a belief implied by his administering the Eucharist) of the penitent's acceptance with God; though this is only the belief of a fallible man, not gifted with the power of reading the heart. But as for absolving, or unconditionally proclaiming absolution, for sin as against God, not only has no man any

power to do this, but it does not appear that the Framers of our Formularies had any such meaning. This may be inferred not only from their language in many other places, but from a prayer introduced in the very office for the Visitation of the Sick;—a prayer *for* divine forgiveness, coming *after* that Formula which is called the *Absolution.*

If, on the contrary, it should be found that the man was *not* a sincere penitent,—if it appeared that he was cherishing feelings of enmity against his neighbour, or was in some way in an unfit state for receiving the Holy Ordinance,—in that case, you would, for the present, withhold the administration of it till he should be brought to a better mind. And in so doing, you will be, on behalf of the Church, and as far as regards the offence against that,—"retaining" his sin, till he should become rightly penitent. You would therefore virtually, if not in words, have retained or withdrawn what is, practically, a sentence of excommunication. And such I conceive to be the true pur-

port of that declaration of our Lord to his Apostles, which is introduced into our Ordination-Service.

Against a wanton or unwise exercise of the office thus entrusted to our Ministers, there is a provision in the reference which is directed to be made to the Bishop. But *some* such power *must* be lodged *somewhere*, if a Church, and the christian Ordinances, are to be anything more than an empty name.

Difficulty of firm Adherence to Duty.

§ 10. The Minister, however, who shall resolve never to shrink from faithfully fulfilling his duty by the bed of sickness, must expect sometimes to be exposed to complaint and obloquy for so doing.* It is a grief to the Ministers of the Gospel to be so often applied to, on the approach of death, by those who have not prepared at all for the great change, during their life:—whose seed-time has been delayed till harvest; and who flatter themselves that there will be a saving

* See *Lectures on a Future State.*

efficacy in our speaking and reading to them, and praying over them, and interceding for them, on their death-bed. "Give us of your oil" (they seem to say), "for our lamps are going out." And the Minister is sometimes even blamed as hard-hearted and unfeeling if he refuse to hold out a confident hope, in some case where he can find nothing in Scripture to warrant such confidence. Some perhaps are even tempted by this consideration, and by the desire of being thought good-natured, and by a really benevolent wish to soothe at least the last hours of a dying man,—some, I say, are perhaps thus tempted into holding out hopes which they themselves believe to be delusive. And perhaps they are thus tempted to administer the Holy Sacrament to one whom they perceive to be wholly unfit to partake of it, from being totally mistaken as to the whole character and design of the Ordinance,—unrepentant of the sin of having hitherto neglected it, and full of a superstitious trust that it will operate as a kind of charm to ensure the salvation of any one who receives it just before

his death. Indeed I have myself known the case of a man who believed himself to be dying, and who solicited the administration of the Rite avowedly on that ground; acknowledging that he would have declined it if he had expected to recover.

One of the evils resulting from this mistaken benevolence, is the danger that surviving friends may thus be encouraged to go on in a course of sin or of carelessness, by seeing one who has so lived departing in a triumphant confidence of salvation, derived from the assurance of a Minister of Christ. Nothing can be more natural than that *they* also should listen to the delusions of the same Tempter, who whispers to them, as to our first Parents, "Ye shall not surely die:"—that *they* also should wait for a death-bed repentance, and propose to themselves to send, when the time shall arrive, for the same Minister who has given such bold and comfortable assurances.

If we were disposed to magnify our office, we should pretend, like the priests of corrupt Churches, to be able to ensure

any one's salvation by our mediation, and by such a ceremony as Extreme Unction, and by saying Masses for the repose of his Soul. God knows they do often procure the *repose of the soul;* but it is only in *this* life. They administer a deadly opiate, which relieves present pain, and lets the disease gain ground unchecked. And they "strengthen the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his evil way, by promising him life."*

In this branch, then, as much as in any, of our private ministerial duty, there is need, in addition to benevolent and zealous assiduity, of a degree of sound judgment, as well as unflinching adhe-

* A conscientious priest of the Church of Rome, who sincerely believes that Confession, and Absolution, and Extreme Unction, are highly important towards the salvation of a soul, will feel himself called on to encounter greater risks from infectious disease than it would be needful, or even allowable, for a Protestant Minister to expose himself to. This distinction I put before the Clergy, at a time when an infectious disease was raging, and when some boastful reproaches had been cast on them.

Thereupon it was reported—and I believe the story is still current—that I had prohibited the Clergy from visiting the sick!

rence to truth, which are not perhaps more common, and certainly not less important, than pulpit eloquence.

Licensed Places of Worship.

§ 11. There is, connected with the Parochial System, an occasional inconvenience, for which partial, though not complete remedies may be provided. Many parishes are too extensive, and many too populous, to be properly attended to by the Pastor, even with aid of one, or of two Curates. And many Churches are too distant from great part of the parishioners, to be regularly attended by them, or too small for the congregations. Hence the necessity of Chapels and other licensed places of Worship, and of Ministers to officiate in them.*

The Ministers of the Chapels that are subsidiary to the Parochial System as far as regards public ministrations, are occupying a most useful and important place.

* That most valuable Institution, the Additional-Curates-Society, has done much, (and would do much more, were its funds as adequately supported by christian liberality as it deserves,) towards supplying the deficiency.

But neither they, if they are worthy and sensible men, nor any of the members of their congregations, who are rightly disposed, will regard *their* office as one of higher importance, or of greater dignity, than that of the Parochial Clergy, to whom they are thus supplemental.

Parochial Visitors.

§ 12. With respect again to domestic ministrations, the Parochial Clergy have often, with the best effect, availed themselves of the assistance of Laymen, in such offices as our Church allows to be entrusted to these. In my own dioceses, for a good many years, most beneficial aid of this kind has been supplied, in a systematic and orderly mode, by persons regularly appointed as Parochial-Visitors, who are approved by the Society established for that purpose, nominated by the Incumbent of each Parish, and finally authorized by the Diocesan.

These Visitors do not, of course, assume any of what are strictly clerical offices; nor encroach on or interfere with, the rights and duties of the Parish Minis-

ter; but aid and facilitate his labours. They ascertain, by friendly visits, what persons are, or are not, attendants on divine Worship, or frequenters of the Lord's Table; what degree of education is possessed by each, and what is provided for their children; *who* are, and who ought to be, preparing for Confirmation; and what kind of life, generally, is led by each. They occasionally read to those who are ignorant of letters: they are the bearers of inquiries or applications of any kind, from the parishioners to the Pastor, and of advice and admonition, and other communications, from him to them: and they are often enabled to ascertain, and to report to him, what has or has not been rightly and profitably understood, of his teaching.

Moreover, as most of the Parochial Visitors are young men preparing for the Ministry, there is, in this Institution, besides the immediate benefit to the Pastor and his People, an incalculable advantage to the parties themselves who are employed, in the training they thus receive in a most important part of mi-

nisterial duty, under the superintendence of experienced men, before taking on themselves the more difficult and more responsible office of the clerical charge of a parish. I have conversed with very many clergymen who had held the office of Parochial Visitor; and almost all of them have spoken in the strongest terms of the advantages they had derived in their profession from this preliminary training.*

I will conclude by once more reminding you that in dwelling on the advantages of the parochial system, and on the importance of the private ministrations of a Parish Pastor, I am far from meaning to disparage either theological studies, or missionary enterprise, or public preaching of the Gospel: but merely inviting the attention which is justly due, to a less conspicuous and imposing, but not less important or less difficult branch of the christian Minister's duties.

* The Divinity-Professors of the University of Dublin bear the strongest testimony to the benefit of the Institution, as subsidiary to their Lectures, and supplying a most important portion of the requisite education for the Ministry.

LECTURE II.

EXPLANATIONS OF THE BIBLE.

Διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν, τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς.
LUKE XXIV. 45.

Twofold call for Explanation of Scripture.

§ 1. THAT solemn question in the Ordination Service, "Are you determined to instruct the people out of the Holy Scriptures?" is one which I trust is never long absent from the mind of any christian Minister; and yet is one which it can hardly ever be out of place to recall and to dwell on. But it is especially brought before us at the present conjuncture, by the discussions which have been going on for some time past, respecting a proposed revision of our Authorized Version of the Bible.

On that large question, however, I do not design now to enter; but I advert to it as suggesting two remarks: (1st), that, as our present Version stands, there is

need of *explanations* to the People of those passages which are made obscure by the use of obsolete, or nearly obsolete words and phrases, as well as of passages (of which there are not a few) in which there are imperfections in the rendering. Under words "*nearly* obsolete" are to be included not only those seldom in use, but many times more that are as much used as ever, but are obsolete in the sense in which they appear in our Bible-Version and in our Prayer-Book; such as "Publican,"—"Lawyer,"—"prevent,"—"conversation,"—"convenient,"—"lively,"—"passion,"—"incomprehensible,"—and a great many others.* And (2ndly) we should remember that even if a Version should be produced that should be not only altogether perfect, but also admitted by all to be perfect, this would not supersede the necessity of *explanation*. There are indeed passages which have, now, some obscurity, and which would be

* *E.g.*, "Carriage,"—"Estate,"—"Nephew,"—"reasonable,"—and above all, "*shall*." See the Rev. Mr. Booker's useful little book on the obsolete words in our Bible.

rendered perfectly clear by an altered rendering; but many would still need explanation.

For, (1st), in any translation of whatever book, it will often be important to point out that some words different in the Original are rendered by the same in our language; and, *vice versâ*, different translations of the same word will often be found. And this it will be desirable to point out to the reader, in order to convey to him more fully the force of the Original.

For instance, when the Apostle Peter, in the conference at Jerusalem [Acts xv.], speaks of God having admitted the Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews, "purifying [καθαρισας] their hearts by [the] Faith," it is plain his mind was full of the recollection of the vision in which he had been told "What God hath *cleansed*, that call not thou common." But the force of his expression is greatly weakened to the English reader, by the two words "purify" and "cleanse" being used to render the one in the Original. And the like takes place in John xv.,

where καθαιρει is rendered by "purgeth," and καθαρος by "clean." "Elect," again, and "chosen," are translations of the same word; and so are "charity" and "love,"—"Comforter" and "Advocate." And many other instances might be added.

Instances are not less frequent of the converse kind, where two or more different words in the Original are rendered by the same, whether through inadvertency, or from necessity; and perplexity or error may be the result, unless an explanation be given. For instance, the two words both rendered "Hell," are of widely different significations; and the mistaking of one of these for the other (which I have known to take place, for instance, in the Apostles' Creed) has sometimes proved a stumbling-block, and sometimes led to most extravagant fancies. And one of the worst corruptions of Christianity — the converting of the christian Minister under the Gospel-dispensation into a "sacrificing or Sacerdotal Priest" (answering to the Levitical)—is fostered by the ambiguity

of a word. Throughout our English Bible, "Priest" is invariably the rendering of Hiereus, the sacrificing Priest; while in the Prayer-Book the same word invariably answers to Presbyteros (from which indeed it is formed), and which is, in our Bible, always rendered Elder.*

In the 2nd place, in a book written in a distant Age and country, there will be many allusions to customs and to places, and to events, which were familiarly known even to the unlearned among the original readers, which can only be understood (and that sometimes but imperfectly) by diligent research. For these reasons, then, there must always be, under any circumstances, a need of explanations of Scripture to the People; and, as matters actually stand, a double need.

Design of our Church.

§ 2. And of our duty in this respect, our Church very distinctly admonishes us, in providing both a Translation of Scripture, which the People are permitted and exhorted to

* See Note A at the end of this Lecture.

read for themselves, and also an Order of Ministers on whom the duty is solemnly imposed of instructing their People in the Scriptures. If our Church had,—like the unreformed Churches,—put human authority in the place of divine—a pretended infallible Church, on a level with the written Word—she would, like them, have left the Bible in a dead language, kept, like the Jewish Holy of Holies, to be occasionally visited by a High Priest only. And had she, on the other hand, designed (as seems to be sometimes taken for granted by our opponents) that every man should, unaided, make out a system of religion for himself, by the simple perusal of a translation of the Bible, she would have left the People with that, and have provided *no* Order of men to instruct them.

The imputation which, as I have just said, is sometimes cast on us, of leaving the unlearned Christian to make out, each for himself, such a religion as he can, from his own unaided study of Scripture, has been perhaps encouraged by the careless language of some Protestants

when contending for the right, and the duty, of private judgment. But that such an interpretation even of the most incautious expressions, is quite unwarrantable, is proved by the *practice* of Protestants of all denominations; all of whom, without, I believe, any exception, make use of some expositions of Scripture, whether called commentaries, notes, sermons, or dissertations. And even independently of these, every *Translation* is manifestly an aid furnished by the learned to the unlearned. Nay, even an *Editor* is to a certain extent a Commentator; since (to say nothing of his choice among different *readings*), his *punctuation*,—on which the sense of a passage will sometimes very much depend, — is an expression of his opinion as to the true meaning. To take one instance out of many, as a specimen; it depends entirely on the punctuation of a passage in 1 Tim. iii. whether we regard the Apostle as teaching that "the Church," or, that the "Mystery of Godliness," is "a pillar and ground of the truth."

It is evidently most irrational to con-

found together (as some are accustomed to do, either from indistinctness of thought, or from sophistical design) two things so manifestly different as the employment of human *help* in any study, and the acceptance of any doctrine on the *authority* of the Teacher. The distinction is perfectly well understood and universally recognised, in all other departments. The student, for instance, of Mathematics, or any branch of physical science, is always glad to resort to the aid of a competent instructor; and yet he would be considered as having studied in vain, if he were to receive scientific truths on his instructor's word. The office of the Professor or Tutor is, not, to be a substitute for the demonstration of those truths, but, to teach the Student to demonstrate them himself. And so also the christian Minister must not presume to "teach as one having authority," like the Lord Jesus, whose miracles were his credentials from Heaven. He must not make himself, or his Church, a substitute for Scripture, or require his interpretations of it to be received on his word, but lead

his people to an intelligent and profitable study of the Scriptures for themselves.

Elementary Instruction, and Exposition.

§ 3. The instruction in Gospel-truth which it is the office of a Church and of its Ministers to afford, may be considered as falling under two heads: (1st) Elementary *systematic* teaching of the doctrines derived from Scripture, and (2ndly) what is more strictly called *explanation* or exposition of the Sacred Writings themselves. On the one side will be ranged Catechisms, and also Creeds (otherwise called "Articles" or "Confessions"), as well as many of the Discourses (whether under the title of Sermons, Tracts, or any other) that from time to time have been composed; and on the other side, Translations, Paraphrases, Notes, and every kind of Commentary (of which kind are many Discourses also) having in view the elucidation of the original Works of the inspired Writers.

On the one side we have the precious ore brought to us, which has been extracted (or professes to have been ex-

tracted) from the mine; on the other, we are provided with instruments for digging in the mine ourselves.

The distinction I have laid down, though of course well known, is one which it is useful to bring frequently and strongly before the mind, because neither branch of instruction should be omitted; and it is important to guard against confounding the one with the other.

It is well known that every one of the books of the New Testament was addressed to persons who were already Christians, that they "might know the certainty of those things wherein they had been instructed" [catechized]. No elementary introduction to the knowledge of Christianity — nothing of the character of a Catechism, Creed, or Liturgy, is to be found in the Sacred Writings; though it is manifest that something of the kind—either oral or written —must have been in use from the very first. And the omission of every such composition in our Scriptures—an omission which certainly would not have been

found had the Writers been left to themselves,—I took occasion, long since, to point out as a strong proof of their having been under superhuman influence.* But the omission is one which it is evident the uninspired Church was designed to supply. The Church's office is *to teach*; that of the Scriptures, to *prove*.† In compositions of this character, we call in Scripture as a witness and as a judge; collecting and collating the various passages which establish the Articles of our Faith.

But it was not designed that any human compositions, however interwoven with passages of Scripture, should supersede the perusal of the Scriptures themselves. We must not be content to employ Scripture as a mere commentary on a human work, but encourage and aid a careful and profitable study of the Sacred Volume itself. For, after all, the Evangelists and Apostles, if the reader is but made thoroughly to understand their writings, will preach the Gospel more effectually than any of us can.

* *Essay on the Omission of Creeds, &c.*
† See HAWKINS *on Tradition.*

There is, as we well know, an objection to this study, in the unreformed Churches, on the ground that there are in Scripture "things hard to be understood, which the unlearned wrest to their own destruction." And to prevent this, they discourage the study of Scripture by the Mass of the People, and seek to keep it in the hands of their appointed guides. And this might be a reasonable procedure, if (1st) we did not find that the Sacred Writers evidently did address themselves to mankind at large, and if (2ndly) there were infallibility conferred on those who take upon them to prescribe "what every Christian ought to know and do." But as it is, the result must be—and has manifestly been—that the supposed wise and learned have become unwise and unlearned, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (there being no one to detect their deficiencies and errors), and in short, "blind leaders of the blind."

Some Explanations may be verified out of the English Bible.

§ 4. The best safeguard, then, that it is possible for us to supply (and what was

manifestly designed to be supplied) against the danger of men's "wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction," is to afford them such instruction as may save them from being thus "unlearned and unstable."

And of the explanations which are needed, with this view, and in the absence of which perplexity or error may arise, there are not a few which, when given, even the English reader may be brought easily to verify for himself. For instance, it may sometimes appear strange to the readers of the first three Gospels to find Jesus summoning disciples to follow Him, and proclaiming Himself as having "the Spirit of the Lord upon Him," without any mention being made of any *previous* miraculous sign having been publicly displayed to justify his pretensions. But when you explain that such display had been made from the first, and was left unmentioned by those Evangelists because they were addressing readers already familiar with that portion of the history, you may refer to the opening of John's Gospel, written, as is reported,

and as seems very evident, in part, to supply some of those omissions. And in *that* is recorded the commencement of Christ's ministry, in his being joined by some of John the Baptist's disciples on their master's testimony to the miraculous sign at his baptism, and in the "beginning of miracles" at Cana, on the evidence of which "manifestation of his glory," those "disciples believed on Him."

Again, many a reader is perhaps somewhat startled at the condemnation of the guest (at the Wedding-Feast in the parable) for not having on a wedding-garment. This would have been, according to *our* customs, unreasonable, when the guests were poor men invited from the highways. But when you explain this by reference to the Oriental custom of providing, on great occasions, garments for the guests at a feast of especial solemnity, you may refer the reader to the passage [in 2 Kings x.] where Jehu, on the occasion of giving a great feast to the worshippers in the Temple of Baal, directs that they shall be supplied with "vestments." His object

evidently was, to *mark* them for the slaughter he meditated; but it is manifest he could not have been doing anything unheard of before, or unusual; else, it would have excited suspicion and alarm. The reader of the parable will then readily perceive that the wedding-garment represents that righteousness of Christ which *He* graciously provides for his invited guests, but which *they* are required to put on, and themselves *wear*, on pain of being "cast into the outer darkness."

Again, the want of coincidence, in English, between the words "Christ" and "Anointed," sometimes causes an indistinctness which may be removed by an explanation easily verified by the English reader. *E.g.*, in Acts iv. we find the Apostles alluding to the 2nd Psalm; "the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his *Christ* . . . . for of a truth against thy Holy Child Jesus whom Thou hast *anointed* . . . . . they were gathered together." Now here the reader may be referred to the Psalm as it stands in our Versions, where he will

read "against the Lord, and against his Anointed."

Again, the English reader of Heb. ix. 15, is likely to have before his mind the idea, not of a *Covenant* ratified by the blood of a victim, but of a Testament in the sense of a *Will* by which any one disposes of his property after his death. For, this latter is a thing familiar to *us*, though to the Hebrews unknown; while, on the contrary, the connexion between a Covenant and a *death*,—the death of a slain sacrifice,—which was familiar to *them*, is quite foreign from *our* customs. And accordingly a *Will* seems to have been what our Translators themselves were thinking of. Yet the right explanation of the passage may be confirmed even by an appeal to our own Bible-Version itself. For, in the very passage cited from the Book of Exodus—"This is the blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined"—the word *Covenant* is the one employed in the translation of the Book of Exodus itself. [Exod. xxiv. 8.] And the reader accordingly is to be admonished that wherever the word "Tes-

tament" occurs in our Version, he is always to understand "Covenant."

It certainly is to be regretted that the word Covenant was not retained throughout; which would have added much to the clearness and the force of many passages; especially that in which the Lord Jesus at the last Supper makes a manifest reference to the sacrificial character of his death, in saying, "this is the new Covenant in my blood;" clearly alluding to the words of Moses, "behold the blood of the Covenant," &c. And no doubt there is an actual mistranslation of the words επι νεκροις, which cannot possibly mean "when men are dead," but "over dead bodies," viz., of the slain victims, when parties had "made a covenant with sacrifice:"* or (according to some) by persons regarded as *figuratively* dead, and represented by the slain victims.

Explanations derived from other Sources.

§ 5. On this point indeed (as in any case of alleged mistranslation) your expla-

* See a very useful little work on the *Authorized Version*, by the Rev. H. Hall, lately published.

nation cannot be verified by the hearers from their own knowledge. You can only refer them to the judgment of any one who has a competent knowledge of the language of the Original.

So also there will often be matters needing some explanation, of points connected with history, geography, or ancient Oriental customs, when your explanations cannot be at once confirmed by the Bible itself, but on which the unlearned reader may be referred to many accessible and well known popular books, or to any one who has read them. *E.g.*, the mere English reader, accustomed to our mode of building, may be perplexed by the warning respecting a hasty flight, "let him that is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of the house." But the perplexity may easily be cleared up, by a description (for which you may refer both to ancient and modern books) of the flat-roofed houses of the Eastern cities, and the thoroughfare along the house-tops, by which a person might escape from the city without once coming down.

Again, a reader of 1 Kings xviii. might be at a loss to understand Elijah's command (when he had built an altar and prepared a sacrifice) to pour numerous barrels of water over the pile, and the ready fulfilment of his directions, at a time when the land had long been so parched with drought that water was become a very scarce and precious article. But the close vicinity of Mount Carmel to the *sea* affords a ready explanation, which may be confirmed by the view of many ordinary maps.

Let no one presume to say that such points as these (of which very many might be enumerated) are trifles not worth explaining, and that it is of no consequence (since they do not involve essential articles of the christian faith) whether, on such points, the People have correct notions or incorrect, or none at all.* One who has a due reverence for the Scriptures will reckon nothing unimportant that can tend to put

* "Is it any great harm if a word be misunderstood?" says a writer of the *Tracts for the Times*, No. 3.

the reader *at home*—if I may so speak—in the Sacred Writings, so as to study them with interest and with intelligence. The question is not whether a correct knowledge of such and such points be essential to salvation; but whether *we* shall have done our duty if we fail to throw any light upon Scripture which it is in our power to afford. What portions of useful instruction may the most safely be omitted, is an idle inquiry, except when an *alternative* is presented to us;—when (from want of time, or some other cause) we are *precluded* from giving *all* the instruction that is needed.

Dread felt of References to the Original.

§ 6. When, however, there is any question about an altered rendering of the Original, in those few places (and they are but few) in which an important difference in the sense is involved, you will perhaps, if you venture to make any reference to the Original, be met by sneers at a pedantic display of Greek-learning. And it is remarkable

that you will often hear this kind of taunt from persons who have no scruple at all of *expounding* Scripture,—asserting boldly that this or that passage in our English version must mean so and so; a signification perhaps different from what the words at the first glance would seem to convey; and drawing inferences—sometimes very bold ones,—from the words before them. But any reference at all to the *Original*, these persons will decry as presumptuous and pedantic.

Pedantry is, of course, a fault to be avoided; and that, not in one department only, but in all. And "no Art," says Bacon, "can teach the timely and suitable application of the Art." But an exemption from pedantry would be too dearly purchased by a rejection of learning, or a resolution to make no use of it, for fear of its abuse. I would recommend then, not only a general study of the Original Scriptures, but a perusal in the Original of each chapter that you are about to read in Church, and especially, of any text you are about to preach from; with an especial care never to presume to

apply any such text in any sense (however true and useful) different from what the Sacred Writer designed in that very passage.

But you will be met perhaps by an outcry against the danger of unsettling men's minds, by allowing them to know that the Scriptures were not originally written in our own language, and that accordingly, what we commonly call the Bible is a *translation* of the Bible; or that our Translators claimed no infallibility; or that what is called the Authorized Version is not (like the Vulgate, to the Church of Rome) the standard and rule of faith to which our Articles refer; or that there ever existed any difference of opinion among Scholars as to the true reading or true sense of any passage in the Original.* Nay, you may even meet with persons who will deprecate your explaining to the People that the divisions into chapters, and into verses, were not the work of the original Writers themselves, but were introduced long

* See Note B at the end of this Lecture.

after, for the convenience of reference. That the mistake exists among many of the unlearned, I have actually known given as a reason, not for correcting that mistake, but for leaving them under this error, for fear of unsettling their minds!

No one need wonder if an objection, on the same ground, and from the same persons, should be raised against the correction of a typographical error. Most persons probably are aware that in the passage about "straining at a gnat," the word "at" is a misprint for "out." And this error, which was corrected in an edition of the Bible printed about the middle of the last century, was afterwards restored, and appears in the modern editions. We may perhaps be told that it would unsettle men's minds to correct it.

This kind of dread of unsettling, conduced very much, no doubt, to the retaining of the Scriptures in a dead language, in the Romish and Greek Churches. For, there never was a religious scruple against translating Scripture from the Original tongues, as there

is, in reference to the Koran, among Mussulmans. On the contrary, the Latin Version in the Romish Church, and the old Sclavonic used in the Russian, (neither of which are now understood by the people,) were Translations made by those Churches into the (then) vernacular languages, on purpose that the Sacred Books might be accessible to the unlearned. And it was by small and imperceptible steps that those languages became gradually changed into those now spoken.

Danger of exciting deserved Distrust.

§ 7. But nothing tends so much, in the end, to unsettle men's minds as their discovering (which they are almost sure to do, sooner or later) that, in some point, they have been kept in darkness, or misled, by their appointed guides. For "suspicions," says Bacon, "like bats, always fly by twilight." When once men have come to learn that what has been called "Reserve," or "Economy," or "Phenakism," has been practised on them—that some truth has

been concealed from them, or some error encouraged,—they will then be very likely to doubt *how much;* and to feel no confidence even in what does admit of being well-established. When they find that our Authorized Version did not exist at the time when the Articles were framed which make Scripture the Rule of Faith, and that two different Versions are in actual present use in our Church, and that our Translators not only claimed no infallibility, but in several instances even proclaim their doubt as to the right rendering, by giving *two*,—one in the Text, and the other in the Margin;—if the result of these and other such discoveries should be a general distrust of our teaching, and perhaps ultimately a disbelief of Christianity altogether, for this we shall be chiefly responsible. Members of the Romish Church who sincerely believe, on the authority of their Church, that the Latin Vulgate is a perfectly correct and infallible Version—a belief for which *we* think there is no good ground, and for which *they* are often reproached—may retort on some

of those who censure them, that at least they are guilty of no inconsistency, and of no deceit, since they do not adhere to a Version which they *know* to be not perfectly correct, nor endeavour to persuade their people that it is so, while secretly convinced of the contrary.

The ultimate inexpediency, however, of all timorous suppression of truth, or connivance at error,—all departure from the simple, frank, straightforward, open course,—is what it is seldom *given* to any one to discover, till too late, unless he is a sincere votary of truth for its own sake, and shuns all indirect procedure, not from calculation of consequences, but on principle. And such a man will deprecate concealment and disguise *universally*, and not merely when the truths suppressed are those which he is especially anxious to inculcate, and when the errors connived at are such as he is particularly opposed to.

This is evident. But you may meet with some who reprobate the system of "Reserve" as practised by those who *avow and defend* it, yet are—quite un-

consciously—giving countenance to what amounts very nearly to the same thing. For, the learned *have* access to various Versions of Scripture, and to the Original, and to various editions of the Original, containing in some instances different readings; and to numerous books which throw light on many passages of Scripture. Now if all the knowledge that is to be derived from these sources, is to be studiously kept back from the Mass of the People, as something which they had better be without, this surely is something very like the system of "Reserve" or "Double-doctrine." It implies that there is to be one Religion for the initiated, and another for the Mass; who are not only not to be *required* to know what they may not perhaps have leisure or inclination to learn, but, to be *prohibited* from access to knowledge which they are able and willing to acquire.

Disparagement of Reason & of Knowledge.

§ 8. But perhaps you may be met by florid declamations on the insufficiency of *mere* knowledge for the formation

of the christian character, and against trusting to Reason *alone,* without any impression being made on the heart, or any application of what is learnt, to the conduct. The sophistical insertion of some single word, such as "mere" or "alone," serves often to give currency to a kind of fallacy* so gross that it is wonderful it should be so often employed, and so often with success. No one, in providing his ship with a Rudder and a Compass, is understood to mean that these will *alone* bring the Vessel into the right Harbour, without sails or oars, or other motive power. But shall we then throw aside the Rudder and Compass, and spreading the sails to the wind, leave the vessel to be driven about as chance shall direct?

If a handful of wild fanatics believe that a certain brother of theirs is an incarnation of the Deity, on what ground do we reject him as a blasphemous impostor? Jesus of Nazareth made that claim; and He was so rejected. There is

* "Irrelevant conclusion," otherwise called "Ignoratio Elenchi."

no difference between the two cases, except evidence and want of evidence. "If I had not done among them," said our Lord, "the *works* that none other man did, they had not had sin." Why should any one believe in Jesus, yet refuse to acknowledge Mahomet? or that insane woman who, some years back, pretended to be a prophetess, and made her deluded followers believe that she would rise from the dead? or those pretended prophets who have led so many thousands of disciples to their new settlement in America? No answer can be given, except that which our Lord gave, "if I do not the *works* of my Father, believe me not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me:" . . . . "I am come in my Father's name, [*i.e.*, displaying his power], and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name [*i.e.*, requiring to be trusted on his own word], him ye will receive." Now this is manifestly an appeal to our Reason. As for feelings of religious veneration, no one can doubt that the followers of Mahomet, and of other false prophets, were

strongly under the influence of such feelings. But they believed, and felt confidence, unreasonably, in those who displayed no credentials from Heaven—no "demonstration of the Spirit and of Power."

Disparagement of Miraculous Evidence.

§ 9. Of late years, however, there have appeared some who, professing to be Christians, deny or attempt to explain away all the christian miracles; or at least endeavour to disparage all miraculous evidence,—and indeed all evidence whatever,—of the Gospel, except the feeling of its suitableness to our wants and wishes, and to our moral judgment. They are for deciding on the truth or falsity of any system, and accepting or rejecting it, entirely without any reference to external signs, and merely from its conformity or non-conformity to our notions of what is right and good and needful.

Now it is precisely on this ground that the majority of the Jewish nation rejected Jesus. The reality of his miracles they

admitted; but they said, "this man cannot be of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath-day." The religion and the morality which He taught were quite foreign from all their notions: and a "kingdom not of this world" was quite contrary to their expectations and wishes. They looked—as their descendants do at this day—for a kingdom of great earthly splendour and power, and a Christ who should be a mighty conqueror, exalting their nation above all Gentiles. And hence it was that when Jesus "came unto his own, his own received Him not."

But perhaps you will be told that these men ought to have had higher and purer moral principles; and then they would have been struck with the sublimity and purity of the Gospel of Christ. But whence were they to derive this moral improvement which they needed, but from the very lessons of Jesus Himself? And this is precisely the process that did take place with his Disciples. They became so, on the evidence of his mighty works; and though originally infected with much

of the worldliness and narrow-mindedness of the rest, they gradually and slowly learned from their Master to correct and elevate their moral views; and *then* they arrived at that just appreciation of his doctrines, and suitable admiration of them, which was not the original *foundation* of their faith, but the *reward* of it.

The words of those Jewish officers who had been sent to arrest Jesus, "Never man spake like this man," have perhaps had the effect of fostering the notion that, in some instances at least, conversions were effected by the *sole* force of the evidence afforded by the excellence of his moral teaching. But there seems no ground for any such inference, at least in *that* case. For, those officers could not have been ignorant that the *miracles* of Jesus were *acknowledged by all*, friends and foes; though attributed by his adversaries to the agency of evil demons. He could not, therefore, have been viewed by them as a *mere* moral teacher, but as either a Heaven-sent messenger, or else a wicked

magician. The question before them was, *which* of the two He was likely to be; and *that* question it was that they seem to have decided from the discourses He uttered.

Real Results of right Instruction.

§ 10. If, then, we would be indeed followers of Christ and his Apostles, and would lead our People to be so, we must address them as rational Beings; not, indeed, reckoning mere intellectual culture (which the Apostles did not) as the sole, or the chief, or the ultimate object, but as an indispensable means towards our end, if that end is to be, well-directed piety, and not any wild and perhaps noxious superstition.

And we may be assured that sound and judicious instruction—leading men to be "in malice, indeed, children, but in understanding, men"—will be so far from unsettling their minds, that it will even have the opposite effect, by showing that we are not seeking to deceive them, or to keep them in the dark, but are justly entitled to their confidence.

This will hold good, even when you find occasion to allude to different Versions, or to different readings; or even to give a different rendering of some passage from that of our English Bible. For, in fact, one of the most satisfactory proofs within the reach of the unlearned, of Scripture-truth, is, that all different Editions, and different Versions, by independent and even rival Translators, agree in setting forth all the main facts and main doctrines of Christianity; thus doing away all suspicion that men are required to trust implicitly to the honesty of the learned, and that these may have formed a *conspiracy* to delude them. And when you admit (what would else be found out in time, were you to deny it) that our Translators were fallible men, claiming no inspiration,—and when you notice, in those very few places where it is needful, the mistakes of our Authorized Version,—you will be the more readily believed, in saying—as you may with perfect truth,—that it is on the whole an admirable translation, and sets forth all the essential truths of the Gospel.

Proposed Revision of the Authorized Version.

§ 11. As for the questions respecting a change, or a revision, of our Authorized Version, I shall not—as I said at the beginning—enter into a discussion of them. But I take this occasion of remarking that I see insuperable objections to anything that could with propriety be called a NEW VERSION. Any one, indeed, who delights in special-pleading subtleties may perhaps chuse to insist that the alteration of a single word constitutes a *new* Version; or, on the other hand, he may contend that great and important changes in nearly half the words in the book, constitute merely a revised and *corrected* Version. But speaking in conformity to ordinary usage, I would say that it would be undesirable to have the language of our Version modernized, except in those few instances where the partial obsoleteness (already alluded to) of certain words, causes obscurity, or mistake as to the sense. And I should be sorry to see any changes made respecting which there could be

differences of opinion among persons entitled to respect.

But some points there are, on which it seems impossible that any doubt could (in the present day) exist, and in which accordingly changes might be introduced without offending or alarming any reasonable person;—changes very small indeed in amount, and in absolute magnitude, but not of small advantage. To take one instance as an example; in the passage in 1 Tim. vi. 5, where "gain" is spoken of as taken for "godliness," the mere transposition of those words would make the passage sense, which at present is utterly unintelligible. It seems not unlikely that the present rendering may have arisen originally from a clerical error, or a misprint. But at any rate it may safely be assumed that there is, now, no scholar in existence who can doubt what is the meaning, and the only possible meaning, of the Apostle's words;—that he is speaking of men who regarded the profession of Christianity as a source of emolument.

In such a case as this, and also in some others, in which the omission or insertion of the *Article* is what all would allow (at the present day) to be an error, and where the sense is thus marred, as in putting "many" for "*the* many," the text should at once be boldly set right. In several other instances where *nearly* all would agree that either a wrong reading has been followed,* or a mis-translation given, the correction might be inserted in the Margin, so as to leave each reader his choice.

For instance, where we read [John xix. 13] that Pilate brought forth Jesus and "*sat down* on the judgment-seat," there clearly ought to be a marginal reading, to be used by any one who might prefer it, that "he *seated* him [Jesus] on the judgment-seat," saying, "behold your king!" The verb in the Original admits of either sense:† but the context leaves little doubt which is the right one here:

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* As, for instance, in Acts xi. 20, where the persons spoken of were evidently not the "Grecians" but "the Greeks."

† See (in the Original) 1 Cor. vi. 5; and Eph. ii. 20.

for if Pilate had used those words, seating *himself* on the Throne, every one would have understood him as proclaiming *himself* their king; whereas it is plain he designed to present to them *Jesus* as King.

And here I would observe, by the way, that no copy should ever appear (as is too often the practice) without the *marginal readings*. These are, in fact, a part of the Work of our Translators; so that the omission of them in any volume professing to be the Authorized Version, amounts to a falsification.

It would also be an improvement which, I conceive, no one could object to, that the words supplied by the Translators should no longer be in *Italics*—the sign, in all other books, of the *emphatic* words —but, according to the usual practice in other books, within [square] brackets.

The division also of the Text into paragraphs with reference to the sense, marking the chapters and verses in the Margin only, would help to guard the reader against the mistakes above noticed. And this mode of printing was adopted in an edition of the Bible by the

well-known Bishop Wilson of Sodor and Man; and is to be found in the best editions (as you are doubtless aware) of the Greek Testament.*

Temptation to neglect explanatory Teaching.

§ 12. But whether such a revision as I have alluded to shall ever take place, or any different one, or none at all, our duty must still be, to supply our People with such explanations of the Sacred Books, as must, *in any case*, be needed.

I have dwelt thus earnestly on this branch of our duty, not, of course, as meaning to disparage the others, but because there is, to some persons, a strong temptation to neglect it. Those who have (or believe themselves to have) the

* The running-titles also, which have often been altered from time to time, without any authority, and which are sometimes such as rather to mislead than to aid the reader, should be carefully revised. I have known, *e.g*, the word "Deacon" mentioned in a Theological Dictionary as occurring in Acts vi., though the word *never once occurs* throughout the whole book! But the writer had evidently been misled by the running-titles and headings of chapters.

gift of pouring forth hortatory addresses in a style of impassioned and stirring eloquence, may be tempted to confine themselves too much to the exercise of that gift, and to be occupied almost exclusively in what they call appeals to the heart. The effects produced by such addresses are often immediate and striking, though seldom lasting, unless when preceded or accompanied by what is more properly called instruction;—unless the metal that is heated be moulded into the proper form.

But such persons as I have alluded to are under a temptation to shun the less showy and more troublesome task of patiently labouring, day after day, and year after year, first to acquire themselves, and then to impart to a congregation of whom many perhaps are dull-minded and little educated, those rudiments of knowledge which are needed for a profitable study of the Scriptures.

And again, the hearers will usually admire more, and be more gratified by, a style of exciting eloquence, than by discourses of which *explanation* forms the

chief part. For, to *learn* requires attention and some degree of laborious exercise of the mind; which is often distasteful, to those especially who have been little accustomed to study. But *excitement*, on the other hand, implies no *labour;* the hearer derives often much gratification from the stirring up of his feelings, but is altogether passive as far as regards mental *exertion.*

What style of preaching therefore will usually be the most agreeable to a large portion of mankind, and the most admired by them, is sufficiently obvious.

I am not, however, considering such a case as that of a man deliberately preferring popularity to the real edification of his flock, and to the faithful service of his divine Master. If such a person could exist, he would evidently be beyond the reach of admonition. But if any one feels confident that he is quite safe from all danger of having his judgment biassed in favour of what is most liked and most applauded by those around, or of being tempted to overrate

the importance and utility of that which he finds the easiest to himself, and in which he most excels,—if he feels quite secure against all danger of any such temptation, I should then say that he is in the greatest danger. For, our real safety depends on vigilant self-distrust.

Pains and Skill requisite for Exposition.

§ 13. But any one, who does but labour patiently and skilfully to impart,—"line upon line, and precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little,"—such instruction as is needed, will have the gratification, after a time, of finding that even those of no superior abilities, and of very imperfect education, can be brought to understand a great deal more than persons who have not fairly tried the experiment would think possible; and to take an interest in matters to which many would expect to find them hopelessly indifferent. Multitudes of persons of very humble station have been brought (as I can testify from my own knowledge) to read, with lively interest, and with intelligence, books which many a one would formerly

have pronounced, from antecedent conjecture, to be wholly beyond their reach.

I have spoken of the necessity of *skill* as well as patience, because the art of affording explanatory instruction, requires (like all other arts) a skill which cannot be acquired without diligent practice. Any one who should imagine himself qualified to teach whatever he does but himself know, would be as much in error as if he should undertake to practise as a Physician, from a mere book-knowledge of anatomy and pharmacy, without having ever attended a sick bed, or felt a patient's pulse. We need a knowledge not only of the *things* to be taught, but of the *persons* to whom they are to be taught; —not only of the qualities of the Medicine, but of the constitution of the patient. And a mere *general* knowledge of Human Nature is not sufficient. We should understand also the peculiar habits of thought and mental constitution of whatever class of persons we are to instruct; —whether children, or adults,—the gentry, or the mechanics,—seafaring men, or husbandmen, &c. Hence in Missionary-

work it has been found that those have been most successful who have confined their attention almost entirely, each to a particular class of unbelievers; one to the Mahometans, another to the Brahminists, another to the Parsees; &c.

With that Class, whatever it may be, which we would instruct, we must *converse* much; not merely talking to them, but *listening* to them, so as to become nearly as familiar as themselves with their ideas, and to be able to draw our illustrations from things with which they are the most conversant. If any one should tell you of a person who had supplied with useful instruction—whether orally, or in treatises for popular use,—the humbler classes of society, *without having ever had much personal intercourse with them*, you may at once conclude either that he does not really mean what his words express, or else that he is an utterly incompetent judge of the whole matter.

Presumptuous Explanations to be shunned.

§ 14. I will advert, in conclusion, to one caution in re-

ference to explanations; a caution which has been sometimes grievously neglected. We must not attempt explanations of divine mysteries which are unrevealed, or partially and dimly revealed, in Scripture. Very acceptable indeed, to some hearers, are bold interpretations of unfulfilled Prophecies—of Prophecies which *would* have been made quite clear at once, had the Almighty so willed—and speculations on the divine decrees which (as our Article expresses it) are "secret to us." But of matters beyond human reason, we should seek diligently to know as much, and be *content* to know *only* as much, as the All-Wise has thought fit to disclose to us. As was most justly observed by Scaliger,

> "Nescire velle quæ Magister optimus
> Docere non vult, erudita inscitia est."

And we should not listen to any one who attempts to explain the nature of the Most High as He is in Himself, and why, and how, the sufferings of Christ were necessary for Man's salvation, and why evil exists in the universe, and other mysterious points which are

beyond human Reason, and which Scripture does not reveal.

And equally to blame are both those who profess to explain, where God has not given us revelation, the reasons of his dealings with Man, and those again who insist on it that in such and such a case He *had* no reason at all, but acted as He did "to declare his sovereignty," and "for his own glory;" as if He could literally desire glory! When the Most High has merely revealed to us his Will, we have no right to pronounce that He *had* no reasons for it except his will, because He has not made them known to us. Even an earthly king, who is not responsible to any of his subjects for the reasons of his commands, may think fit sometimes to issue commands without explaining his reasons: and it would be very rash for any one to conclude that he had *no* reason at all, but acted from mere caprice.

So also, a dutiful child will often have to say, "I do so and so because my parents have commanded me; that is reason enough for me." But though this

is—to the child—a very good reason for *obeying* the command, it would be a very bad reason with the *parents* for *giving* that command. And he would show his filial veneration and trust, not, by taking for granted that his parents *had* no reason for their commands, but, on the contrary, by taking for granted that there *was* a good reason both for acting as they did, and for not giving him any explanation.

It is therefore no pious humility, but, on the contrary, great presumption, for Man to pronounce—where Scripture does not tell us—either what were the reasons of God's dealings with us, or that He had none at all. One who pretends to be so much wiser, or better informed, than the Apostles and Prophets, as to tell us what they knew not, or at least were not commissioned to make known, must greatly overrate the faculties of Man.

Yet some, it is remarkable, who are rather neglectful of the duty of explaining many things that do admit of clear explanation,—much of the meaning of the Sacred Writers in passages that were

in their days perfectly intelligible to the unlearned among their hearers—these same persons are ready to give theoretical explanations of points which were *not* revealed to the Apostles and Prophets, or at least which they were not commissioned to make known to *us*. When the illumination from Heaven—the rays of Revelation—fail to shed such full light as they wish for, on Gospel-mysteries, these speculators bring to the dial-plate the lamp of human philosophy, to cast the shadow whichever way they will.

But it is not faith, but want of faith, that refuses to believe what we cannot explain to our own satisfaction. It is not humble piety, but profane presumption, that pretends to know and to teach what was concealed from the Inspired Writers, or at least—under divine guidance—concealed *by* them.

And besides the presumptuousness of such a proceeding, it is likely to present a stumblingblock to the thoughtless; leading them, when they perceive (as they usually will) that the pretended explanations of certain doctrines are utterly futile,

to reject the doctrines themselves along with the unsound theory that has overlaid them.

Be diligent and careful then,—I would say to the christian Minister,—in giving such instruction to your People as may enable them to understand what is set forth for their use in the Scriptures, but not what is omitted there. Enough and more than enough is there taught to "make us wise unto salvation," if we do but take pains to learn it, and practically to apply it. Hereafter, in a better World, more will doubtless be revealed. We shall no longer "see as now, by means of a mirror, darkly, but face to face, and know even as also we are known." For if in this life we "purify ourselves even as He, our divine Master, is pure, we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

NOTES TO LECTURE II.

Note A.

It has been maintained that since ἱερευς is derived from ἱερος, *sacred* (as "sacerdos" from "sacer"), therefore this term may rightly be applied to any one concerned—as a christian minister is—about *things sacred*. The Apostles, however, appear to have thought otherwise. They must have known what kind of office was, actually, in their Age and Country, denoted by the title Hiereus: and if they had designed to establish any such office in the christian Church, or any office that could properly be so called, they would not have carefully abstained,—as they have,—from applying that term to the Elders they ordained. The derivation of the word ἱερευς they doubtless well knew; but they were never guilty of the absurdity of taking as the right meaning of a word, not, that which is *actually understood by it*, but, the meaning of the *root* it was derived from. On that principle "*Presbyter*" (as well as the English word "sir," which is contracted from "senior") can only signify "any man advanced in years;" and "*Pontifex*" will bear a sense quite remote from what we have been used to attach to it.

While upon the subject of obscurities from variations in the rendering, I should wish to recommend strongly to the attention of the Biblical student the Rev. William De Burgh's *English-Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament, and English-Greek Concordance of the New Testament.* The design of those works is to furnish, together with a *complete* Concordance of the Originals of the Scripture (hitherto a desideratum), a comparison

with the Text of the English Translation: exhibiting at one view, not alone every passage in which each Hebrew or Greek word occurs, but the variety of renderings of it in the Authorized Version; and *vice versâ*, by means of a Reverse-Index, the various Hebrew or Greek words rendered by the same English: so as to put the mere English reader in possession of the Originals as regards the true parallelism of Scripture terms; which an English Concordance cannot do; and also providing the Student with the best Lexicons to both,—deducing the meaning of the words of Scripture from the use made of them by the inspired Writers, and thus affording an aid to sound Biblical criticism which it is impossible to over-rate.

Note B.

That I may not be thought to be combating a shadow, I subjoin an extract from the evidence given some years ago before a Parliamentary Committee on Education. "I should object in general to any Version "different from our own, without inquiring into the "question whether it was faithfully translated or not; "because I conceive that when you give the Scriptures "to a child, you present him with the Word of God; and "you should tell him that you are presenting him with "an infallible guide; and that anything that shakes his "opinion in that guide, so far mars the purposes for "which you have given the Book, and I cannot conceive "anything to do that more effectually than a diversity "of Translation of the Scriptures."—[*Lords*, p. 582.] Mr. Wyse.] "Are you aware that the Version of the "Psalms used in the Church-Service is very different "from that to be found in the Authorized Version? "[*Ans.*] I am.—Do you not think the child who hears "them recited in the church, and afterwards reads them "in the Authorized Version in school, will naturally "notice this difference of version? [*Ans.*] I do not "think there is one child in a thousand who knows of

"the existence of the difference, or ever has read the "Authorized Version in the Bible; they read it in the "Prayer-book. I am ready to go further, and say, I "am very sorry there *are* two versions; I am very sorry "that one was not altered at the time the Gospels and "the Epistles were; but I do not see why, because there "is this difference, that you should extend it.—Should "this difference be perceived by the child, do you think "any injury would arise from it? [*Ans.*] I should "think that a very troublesome question to answer to "any child.—So that it is a matter of contingency only, "depending upon the capacity of the child, his acuteness "and opportunities, whether his mind may not be injured "by this difference of version? [*Ans.*] I think it can "be explained to the child; but the fewer points of that "kind there are to be explained to the child, I think so "much the better."—[*Commons*, 2248, 2251.]

LECTURE III.

EXPLANATIONS OF THE PRAYER-BOOK.

Προσεύξομαι τῷ πνεύματι, προσεύξομαι δὲ καὶ τῷ νοΐ.
1 Cor. xv. 14.

Duty of giving religious Instruction.

§. 1. The duty of giving religious *instruction* to the People is *one* of the most important of our duties, and what may be said to *characterize* our office, as established by the Apostles, and maintained in our Church, and as distinguished from the office of the *sacerdotal* Priest under the Levitical law, and of the Priest in the unreformed Churches; whose chief function is, not so much instruction, as the offering of a supposed sacrifice on behalf of the People, and the administering of (supposed) sacraments.* In our Church, indeed, as in almost all others, the administration of the Sacraments is generally committed (very naturally and properly) to the Clergy. It is a thing evidently suitable that a christian Minister should

* See Note C at the end of this Lecture.

take the lead in the public Worship, and especially in the most solemn portion of it, the celebration of the Sacraments. But it is remarkable that all the Apostle Paul says in his Epistles to Timothy and to Titus of the duties of christian ministers (which is not a little), has reference to the instruction of the People, and contains no allusion to the administration of the Sacraments. And this certainly does seem to indicate at least what *he* considered as the most *essential* portion of their office.*

Explanations of the Prayer-Book.

§ 2. And what I have above said concerning explanations of the Scriptures, will equally apply to ex-

* It is remarkable that there is, in one point, a coincidence between some of the extreme High-Church and extreme Low-Church Parties; both seeming to regard the administration of the *Sacraments* as the principal and distinguishing office of the CLERGY. There are persons who do not scruple to authorize, and to employ—in fact, virtually to ordain—any one,—churchman or dissenter,—to the office of publicly expounding Scripture, and holding public Meetings for Preaching and Prayer; though they would not think of authorizing him to administer the *Sacraments*.

planations of the Prayer-Book. As the benefit of Scripture is so far diminished in proportion as parts of it are indistinctly or erroneously understood, so, the benefit of our Church-Services is impaired to those who do not pray "with the spirit, and pray with the understanding also." And it would be a mistake to conclude that no elucidations of anything in the Prayer-Book are needed except for persons who come forward with objections, or with complaints of perplexity. On the contrary, very great familiarity with the *words* of any composition will frequently cause men to overlook their own imperfect apprehension, or *mis*-apprehension, of the sense. The earlier any one has been taught to repeat forms of words of which he does not understand the meaning, the greater will be the difficulty of subsequent explanation, and the less likely he will be to seek for, or to perceive that he needs, any explanation. If you inquire of some persons what they understand by such and such passages, which they have heard and

read many hundred times, and perhaps can readily repeat by rote, you will be surprised,—and perhaps they themselves also, no less,—to find how indistinct and confused are the notions they have formed of the meaning. For, in all matters, *familiar acquaintance* is apt to be mistaken for *accurate knowledge.*

What I have been saying, every minister will be able to confirm from his own experience, who has been in the habit of much personal intercourse with various classes of his people. And *without* such intercourse, he cannot be a competent instructor. Whatever his learning and ability, he will be (as I have above remarked) like a physician undertaking to practise from mere book-knowledge, without having ever visited a sick-chamber. And if he has had intercourse only with certain classes,—if, for instance, he has conversed only with adults of the higher orders, and not with children, and the uneducated,—he will be deficient as an instructor, in reference to these latter. Neither his oral nor his

written instructions will be well-suited to them. And (as I observed above) if you should meet with any one who maintains that he himself, or that another, who has had little or nothing of such intercourse with the humbler classes, is qualified either to give lectures, or to write books, well-fitted for their instruction, you may conclude that (if he really means what his words express) he is altogether an incompetent judge of the subject.

Suggested Alterations.

§ 3. As for the questions which have of late excited much and continually increasing interest, respecting a suggested revision of our Prayer-Book, on these I shall not at present enter. It is known to many how fully and how earnestly, many years ago, both I and my much valued friend, Bishop Dickinson, dwelt on the importance of our being provided with some kind of government for the Church, distinct from that of Parliament; which is, and which is manifestly conscious of being,—unfitted

for that office.* What we advocated was, not a mere temporary Commission, expressly and avowedly established for the *remedy of some specific alleged evils*,—which is likely to be *more alarming* to men's minds, and at the same time must fall short of what is needed,—but, some Power that should be competent, in all points, and always, to inquire and to decide (subject, always, to the control of the Civil Legislature)—whether any, and what, regulations or alterations are from time to time needed. This, we remarked, would be likely not only to provide remedies, when wanted, for any actually existing inconveniences, but also to give increased satisfaction and confidence as to a multitude of points wherein *no* change would be proposed; since men would understand that (as is the case in secular matters) whatever was left unaltered was so left, not because there was no power to alter it, but from a delibe-

* See Charge of 1844. Bishop Dickinson's *Appeal in favour of Church-government*, first published as a pamphlet, is reprinted in the *Remains*. (Fellowes, Ludgate-street.)

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rate judgment that the alteration would not be desirable.

It was urged, on the other side, and with perfect truth, that there are difficulties and objections in the way of every proposed plan for accomplishing such an object. And this consideration might be accepted as decisive, if there were no objections,—no evils of any kind,—on the opposite side; or if these latter were not still greater, and were not continually on the increase. The difficulties in our way are undoubtedly not only great, but much greater than they were a century and a half ago; and were greater then, than when the illustrious Bacon wrote on the subject; who remarked that to represent continual revision as needful indeed, in secular concerns, but that ecclesiastical matters required none, would be like maintaining that though houses and castles need being repaired from time to time, churches and chapels will stand for ever without repair. And it may be added, that the now existing difficulties, great as they are, are yet short of what *will* present themselves some years hence,

when the urgency of the call for encountering them will have increased in a still greater proportion.*

When one of the valleys of Switzerland was transformed, not many years ago, into a vast lake, through the damming up of a river by a glacier, it would have been no wise policy for the neighbouring people below to wait in tranquil security till the barrier should burst of itself. If they had begun earlier than they did, to cut channels through the ice for letting off the water, their work, though not without difficulties and risks, would have been easier and far more effectual. As it was, they did set themselves to the work, though later than was desirable. The barrier did burst before they had com-

* Most of what are called the "State Services" have been removed from our Prayer-Book. That for the "Accession" is retained. But it would surely be a great improvement, if this (with some slight changes) were transferred from the Accession-day to the *Birth-day* of the reigning sovereign. As it is, those who are at all thoughtful have an unpleasant feeling when they assemble to pray for a happy and *long* life to the sovereign, on reflecting that this same Service is one that is hereafter to be used as a solemn thanksgiving, as for a *national blessing*, on the anniversary of the *death* of that very individual.

pleted their task; but the damage done, though very great, was not more than, probably, a fourth part of what *would* have ensued, had they left matters to take their own course.

Those persons are at least consistent, however mistaken, who while complaining of certain alleged defects in our Bible Version, or in our Formularies, suggest, whether wisely or unwisely,—some remedial measures: and the same may be said of those who deprecate every change, from a conviction that everything is in a satisfactory state. But those are surely deserving of blame who are always complaining of some supposed faults, while they strenuously oppose every measure by which it is possible that a remedy can be applied. They are inconsistent, and culpably so, in the strictest sense of the word. Any evil or inconvenience to which you not only expect that no remedy *will* be applied, but are resolved that, as far as lies in you, none ever *shall* be applied,—this, you ought to submit to in patient silence, as to an unfavourable season, or an incurable disease, instead

of making complaints, of which the only tendency is to produce fruitless discontent.

Sometimes, however, we are told that the *present* time is ill-suited for taking such and such steps, because there are *parties* within the Church; as if any reasonable man could look forward to a time when parties should no longer exist! And I have even seen an argument against any revision of our Authorized Version of Scripture *as yet*, on the ground that all the existing MSS. of the Original have not yet been collated, and that all scholars are not *as yet* agreed as to all the readings to be preferred, and the renderings to be adopted. It argues great simplicity, if not something worse, to profess readiness to adopt a certain course when certain events shall have taken place, which we may be sure will be as far off a century hence as now. Such reasoners—or at least those who listen to them—may remind one of the rustic alluded to by Horace, who stood on a river's brink, waiting till all the water should have flowed by.

A remark above made in reference to

the Authorized Version of Scripture, is equally applicable to the Prayer-Book; viz., that whether alterations, greater or less, or none at all, be made in it, there must always be need of *explanations* of it, to a large portion at least, of our People; and these it must always be an important part of our duty to supply.

Common Prayer.

§ 4. I would suggest, that, as a preliminary to any exposition of particular portions of any of our Services, it would be advisable to offer some remarks on the design and character, generally, of a *Book* of Common Prayer—beginning, as one might say, your explanations with the title-page: for, the very meaning of that title-page is, by some of the least-educated portion of our congregations, not understood; and by some others not sufficiently attended to. You will find, I apprehend, on inquiry, that some of the most untaught and unthinking understand by *Common* Prayer that which is in *ordinary use;* and will need to have it pointed out to them that what is called in the Prayer

of Chrysostom "our common supplications," is the *united* supplication of the congregation—that which they *agree* in offering up. Many, however, who are not so ignorant as to make the mistake now alluded to, will yet be often found not to have sufficiently attended to the full force of the words "Common Prayer," and the high importance of what they denote. They will need to be reminded that the use of a Book of Common Prayer in our own language, is one of the characteristics of our Church; distinguishing it, on the one hand, from those churches—of which there are several—in which the prayers are read by the minister in a tongue not understood by the people, and, on the other hand, from all those Communities which have no fixed Form of prayer at all, but in which the people have to listen to the extemporaneous effusions of their pastor.

These two latter systems, though widely different in some respects, yet agree in this,—that neither of them can carry out, except very imperfectly (if at all), the design of congregational *joint-*

worship; since, in each, the People—at least the far greater part of them—are rather overhearing another man's prayer, than uniting in prayer themselves. In the Romish, the Armenian, the Coptic, and the Russian Churches, although the learned few—perhaps one in a hundred—may understand the language of the Service, the mass of the congregation will be, as the Apostle Paul expresses it, "Barbarians to him that speaketh, and he that speaketh a barbarian to them."

Extemporaneous Prayers.

§ 5. And in the case of extemporaneous prayer delivered by the minister, it is likely, though understood, not to be *so* understood by the people as to be adopted as *their own address* to the Most High, but rather as an Address to themselves by their minister. And, accordingly, it generally is very much of the character of a sermon thrown into the form of a prayer; and more of an exhortation or instruction *to* the congregation, than a petition offered up jointly *by* them. The very novelty which causes them the more

easily to keep up their attention without any wanderings of thought (which is the chief difficulty with *us* who use fixed Forms)—this very novelty, I say, makes it next to impossible that they should, more than very partially and imperfectly, so go along with what is spoken as to make it their own at the moment.

When, indeed, a minister who habitually officiates in the same congregation makes a practice of constantly introducing the same topics, nearly in the same order, and in the same words, this amounts in practice to a fixed Form of prayer, only recited from memory. The difference is, that it is the composition of the individual pastor, and has not the distinct and deliberate sanction of a Church.

Now, to compose a sermon, and to compose a prayer for congregational use, are not so completely on the same footing that every one who is competent to either, must be equally so to both. For, a sermon may be on the whole edifying, though containing some passages which

part of the hearers may not fully assent to, or even some which they may be right in not assenting to. And, at any rate, they are not themselves *parties* to it, or required to adopt it as their own. But as far as this is the case with a *prayer*, so far it fails of the object of being the joint prayer—the "common supplication"—of the congregation.

Several authors have written in vindication of the *allowableness* of Forms of prayer; adducing the example of the Jewish Church, sanctioned, as it appears to have been, by our Lord, who Himself taught a form to his Disciples; and also the practice of the early christian Churches. And, again, many have urged, and with good reason, the great utility of established Forms of prayer in preserving *sound doctrines* that are embodied in those Forms, and bringing them habitually before the minds of the People, so as to act as a safeguard against any corruption or any omission, of Gospel-truths. For want of such a safeguard, some religious communities have, it is well known, gradually slid into a religious system the

most opposite to what was held by their first founders.*

Many, again, have dwelt on the excellence of our own particular Liturgy, and on its superiority to what the far greater part of christian ministers would be likely to pour forth extempore.

All these are topics not unprofitable to be noticed.

Joint Worship.

§ 6. But the point which should be the most prominently put forward and dwelt on, is the solemn promise of our gracious Lord that "where even two or three are gathered together in his Name, He will be in the midst of them." And He plainly teaches us the purport of that promise, as relating not to the mere meeting together in the same building, but to their coming together for joint prayer; "*agreeing together touching something they shall ask* in his Name:" a kind of agreement which can but very imperfectly, if at all, take place, without the use of established and

* See *Cautions for the Times*, No. 24.

known Forms of Prayer. This consideration you can easily show to be far the most important of all, and in truth decisive of the whole question. And yet it is remarkable that it has been not seldom overlooked. Among others, the celebrated Scotch Reformer, John Knox, though he was so far from disapproving of Forms of Prayer as not allowable, that he actually drew up one for the use of his own Church, yet left the employment of it optional with each minister. He seems to have designed it as an aid to those ministers who had not what is called the "gift of prayer;" just as our Homilies were drawn up for those not qualified to be preachers. And he might have foreseen that no pastor would be likely to proclaim his own deficiency by resorting to such an aid. The consequence was, of course, the universal adoption of extempore Prayers; which are open to the objection I have adverted to.

The book, however, called the *Directory*, put forward by the Republican Parliament, as designed to supersede the

Prayer-Book, leaves everything to the extemporaneous effusions of the minister. It merely gives admonitions as to the general character of the prayers and of the sermons. Of the book I have alluded to, copies are extremely rare; which is a remarkable circumstance, considering how many thousand copies of it must have been at one time in circulation. But to those who have access to public libraries, it will be worth while to inspect it, in order (among other things) to observe how completely it is sheltered against all that host of objections—whether well or ill-founded—which have been brought, or may be brought, against various passages in our Prayer-Book.*

No cavil can be urged against any prayer in the *Directory*, because it contains none. It merely directs, in general terms, that the prayers (as well as the sermon) shall be intelligible, and scriptural, and pious, and edifying, and so forth; directions which no one can object to, but which can be no *guide* to any one.

* See *Cautions for the Times*, No. 25.

If a physician were to tell a patient that he ought to take proper medicines, and to use a suitable diet, no one indeed could say that this ought not to be done; but the instruction would be as unprofitable as it is unexceptionable.

But if any minister to whom that book had been issued as his guide, delivered prayers that were unsound in doctrine, or unedifying, the blame would be laid on *him*, individually, not on the book; because *that*, it would be urged, had charged him to let his prayers be scriptural and edifying. Of any fault, on the other hand—real or imaginary—that may be found, or fancied, in *our* prayers, the blame is thrown, not on the minister, but on the book itself, and on the church which sanctions it.

And, indeed, a similar kind of unfair advantage to that which I have been describing is enjoyed by the opponents of Christianity; many of whom in the present day have adopted a fashion of professing themselves Christians, while they censure and deride every kind of what they call "book-revelation," and would have each

man set up himself as a kind of prophet to himself. When I speak of the similarity of the two cases, I do not, of course, mean to put our Prayer-Book on a level with Scripture, or to claim for it infallibility. But they agree in being both *books;* and no book ever existed, or can exist, against which objections may not be brought—attacks either in the form of open and deliberate censure, or of half-disguised sneer, such as sometimes appear in popular Journals. As we all know, objections have been urged against the Bible—objections from which those who urged them are completely sheltered by, themselves, referring to no book at all for which any one is to be held responsible except the individual writer.*

We should do well, therefore, to warn our People against being misled by an immunity from immediate and direct censure, which is purchased by the danger of much ultimate evil and by the sacrifice of much utility. They should be reminded (to take an example from

* See Note D at the end of this Lecture.

secular matters) that we enjoy a great advantage in living under a constitutional government and fixed laws. Not that our constitution professes to be perfect, or our laws exempt from all inconveniences, or that we ought not to seek by legitimate means to remedy any imperfections; but that we are incomparably better off than the subjects of despotic monarchies, in which the sovereign, and the officers appointed by him, command, and enact, and decide, in all cases, at their own discretion. Yet these are completely sheltered, by the *absence* of fixed laws and constitutions, against all such objections as they might allege (sometimes with plausibility) against ours.

Absence of Liturgies in Scripture.

§ 7. I would suggest, in the next place, that it will be advisable to call the attention of our People to the absence of Liturgies, Creeds, and Catechisms in Scripture. Of this subject I have long since treated very fully,* pointing out

* Essay on *The Omission of Creeds, &c.*

what a decisive evidence is afforded of the *superhuman* guidance under which the sacred Writers of the New Testament must have lived, from their omission of what, humanly speaking, it was morally impossible they *should* (all of them) have omitted. And I also called attention to the superhuman *wisdom* shown, in providing, indeed, in Scripture, sufficient instruction in the fundamental *doctrines* of our religion (which are unchangeable), but leaving to each Church the drawing up of such Offices for public worship, such safeguards against particular heresies, and such catechetical instructions, as should be judged best suited to each particular Age and Country.

But whatever may be any one's private opinion, either as to the merits of our Prayer-Book in particular, or as to the use of *any* prayer-book at all, it is plain that every Minister of a Church which *does* use fixed Forms, is bound, not only to adhere to them, but to put before his People, from time to time, such comments and explanations as may be needed.

Comments. § 8. These comments and explanations will fall naturally under two heads:—(1) In reference to the design and general drift of each of the several portions of our Services; and (2) In reference to the meaning of particular passages that may be obscure, or liable to misapprehension, either from the occurrence of obsolete words, or from any other cause.

With respect to the former of these heads, most Pastors probably have found in the course of their experience, that as children and others of the more ignorant require to be *informed*, so the better-educated classes need to be frequently and earnestly *reminded*, that some of the prayers are appointed to be said by the People along with the Minister, and others by him alone in the name and on behalf of the people; they giving audibly their assent, and signifying their adoption of what is said, by the solemn Amen, or other response appointed.* The duty of

* So great is the misapprehension prevailing among some as to this point, that it is even the ordinary practice of some Congregations to repeat aloud the whole of the "General Thanksgiving," which is designed to be

thus joining and taking the proper part in the public worship, some appear to be utterly ignorant of, while others, who know better, are too often careless and neglectful of it.

And many, I fear, will have had the painful and mortifying office of admonishing many of their People concerning the gross irreverence of habitually absenting themselves from a large portion of the Service, and dropping in, from time to time, in the midst of it; as if the *sermon* were the only matter of any importance. In the Pastoral Admonition on this subject, which I circulated some time ago, I expressed a hope and belief that those who are guilty of this fault are not guilty of it through a wilful and *designed* irreverence towards the Most High, and would not wish to hold up our religion to the scorn of our Roman Catholic and other dissenting

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recited by the Minister alone, the People merely saying the concluding Amen; the same Congregations giving none of the appointed "Responses," and keeping silence during the "General Confession," and the other portions of the Service in which the Rubric does design them to join!

countrymen, but act as they do from mere thoughtlessness. But we should assiduously and earnestly press on their attention that in such a case as this, careless thoughtlessness amounts to a sin of no small magnitude.*

Creeds. § 9. Among the portions of our Services of which the design and general purport may need some explanation or remark, I will particularize the Creeds. That a Creed is something of a totally different character from a Prayer, some persons who have not had much of the requisite experience, might think it superfluous even to mention to any one; and they might be surprised, and almost incredulous, on being told that not only by Roman Catholics, but by many of the ignorant among Protestants, it is a practice to recite the Apostles' Creed even as a part of their private devotions.

But among those who are far better

* I have appended the Address now alluded to, to the end of this Lecture. Note E.

taught than to confound a profession of faith in certain doctrines with an address to the Almighty, you will find not a few who suppose a Creed to be designed as a summary of all the most essential points of christian Faith. And this misapprehension is the more needful to be guarded against, because it does appear that the framers of our Services—at least of the Baptismal Service, and the Catechism—must have regarded the Apostles' Creed as a compendium of necessary christian doctrine. And this mistake has been fostered by the writings of some very well-known Divines of much learning and ingenuity, but who have taken altogether a wrong view of the subject.*

The fact probably is that they had in their own minds so strong an association of our Lord's *Sonship* with his *Divine Nature*, and of his *death*, with his *atonement*, that it never occurred to them to examine carefully whether these doctrines were distinctly stated, or clearly implied, in the Creed: a Creed which may be, and

* See WHEATLEY, ch. iii. § 14. See also *Cautions for the Times*, No. 25.

I believe is, adopted by Socinians. These, moreover, are likely to argue from the omission of any such doctrine in the earliest Creed, that it was not held in the Primitive Church. And the argument admits of no answer, from those who consider a Creed as a summary of all essential doctrines. It is of vital importance, therefore, to explain to our People that this is quite an erroneous view; that the object of a Creed is, not to instruct men in all points of Gospel truth, but to guard against the heresies most prevalent in each age and country. Creeds, therefore, correspond not to the houses we build as our dwelling-places, but rather to the sea-walls which are erected to protect this or that part of the coast from the encroachments of the ocean. And according to this view (which you may easily show to be undoubtedly the correct one) the omission of certain doctrines in the earliest Creed, goes to prove, not that they were not *held*, but that they had then *never been doubted*. The heresies of the first Ages were of quite a different character. The point *then* needing to be

insisted on was not the *divine* nature, but the *human* nature of the Lord Jesus; not the atoning character of his sacrifice, but the *reality of his death.* For this, as you are doubtless well aware, was denied by those early heretics called Docetæ; whose strange theory is still maintained by above eighty millions of persons, who acknowledge Jesus to have been the true Messiah: the Mahometans, who have it as a tradition.

It will be desirable, again, to point out to your People that the Creeds have, according to our Church, no *independent* authority, nor any claim to reception derived from General Councils, or Tradition, but rest only on their conformity to Scripture; as our Reformers have been careful to set forth in the Article on Creeds.

Communion Service.

§ 10. With respect to the Communion Service, most of you probably will have before now found it needful to explain to your People the design and general drift of the *exhortation.* *That* has often been so

understood as to deter altogether many persons from attending at the Lord's Table, under the idea that if they are conscious of sinfulness they would be "eating and drinking damnation to themselves" as unworthy partakers. It is not difficult, and it is highly important, to explain that the unworthiness which the Apostle and which our Reformers had in view, was that careless irreverence of which, in the present day, there is little or no danger: the prevailing fault among *us* being the lamentable *neglect* of the holy ordinance. Certainly any stranger coming among us from some distant land, when he saw the multitudes pouring out of our Churches, when the celebration of the Lord's Supper is about to commence—a multitude whose coming to the Church at all proves that they are not unbelievers, nor totally careless of religious duties—would not fail to conclude that Christianity is not one religion, but two distinct ones; that for communicants, and that for non-communicants. And if he were then assured that all these persons agreed in acknowledging as their divine Master

and Redeemer Him whose last injunction confessedly extending to all his followers, they deliberately and habitually disregarded, he would be almost disposed to disbelieve this assurance as incredible.

It would be foreign from my present purpose to say more on this painful subject. I will only add that I trust you will persevere (not disheartened by any failures) in your efforts to remove, or at least lessen, this grievous scandal to our Church, and which is at the same time so perilous to the souls of its members. With a view to this object, one most advantageous occasion is afforded in the preparation of candidates for Confirmation: an occasion of which I believe most of the Clergy have often availed themselves, and with good effect.

There are in the Communion Service some passages on which, though they are not at all obscure, it will be desirable to make a remark, in order to call the attention of your People to the general design of our Reformers in the words they have employed: I mean the passages in which they have introduced the word "*Sacri-*

fice." They were anxious to guard against the doctrine taught in the unreformed Church, of what is called "the Sacrifice of the Mass:" the doctrine that the literal material body of the Lord Jesus is actually offered up by the Priest when he celebrates the Eucharist; and that accordingly there is daily made, in thousands of places, that sacrifice which Scripture distinctly assures us was made "once for all," and whose efficacy is there set forth expressly on the very ground of its not needing to be (like the typical sacrifices under the law) repeated again and again. To guard against this doctrine, and also, it would seem, against that other notion which some adopted, of the Eucharist being a sacrifice of bread and wine offered up to God, our Reformers not only advert (in the Consecration Prayer) to the "one oblation of Christ once offered by Himself," but also introduce the word, in a different and figurative sense, in the Offertory, and again twice in one of the concluding prayers; speaking of the sacrifice of our *alms* ("with which God is well pleased")—the sacrifice of our *prayers,*

and the offering up of "our*selves* to be a rational, holy, and living sacrifice." It was not thought enough to abstain from all mention of any such thing as the Sacrifice of the Mass; but every other and true sense in which the word sacrifice could be rightly employed, is resorted to, in order to exclude the more effectually the wrong acceptation of it.

I mention this instance as a specimen of those passages on which it may be useful to comment, though no explanation of any difficulty is called for.

"Mysteries" and "Testament."

§ 11. There is a passage in one of the Post-Communion prayers which does, to many readers, need some explanation. I mean that in which the word "Mysteries" occurs. It is a word so commonly employed in the present day to signify "something that cannot be understood," that it will be useful to point out its meaning in this passage, as equivalent to "symbol" or "emblem;" the "holy mysteries" which the communicants are described as having "duly received" being

the bread and wine, considered as symbolically *representing* the body and blood of our Saviour; even as the Apostle Paul speaks of *marriage* as a "mystery" ("sacramentum" in the Vulgate) when considered as an emblem representing the union of Christ and his Church. In like manner we read, in the same prayer, of the "mystical" [*i.e.*, figurative] body of Christ; which is the blessed company of all faithful [believing] people: and in the Baptismal Service, of the water employed for the "mystical" [*i.e.*, figurative or emblematical] "washing away of sin."

Still more important is it (as I have already observed) to explain that the word "*Testament*" which occurs in the Consecration prayer, is to be understood as signifying "Covenant," or "Dispensation." The use of the word "Testament" is the more to be regretted, because it affects the very title itself by which the Sacred Volume is known among us. And it renders totally unintelligible that most important passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews which goes to establish so

clearly the *sacrificial* character of our Lord's death.

§ 12. There can be no need to enter on any enumeration of the words and phrases that will call for comment or elucidation. Attentive perusal with that view, and catechetical instruction of the young, and conversation with various classes of the parishioners, will bring those expressions under notice; and I cannot suppose a Minister will be at any loss to give such explanations as are needed. *Obsolete Words.*

In reference to passages which have become somewhat obscure, or liable to be mistaken through the changes in our language, most persons will doubtless have observed, both in our Version of the Bible, and in the Prayer-Book, that the words which have wholly gone out of common use are very few compared with those which, though as much used as ever, have been greatly modified in their signification. The word "reasonable" *e.g.* is in common use now, but not in the sense of "rational" [*i.e.*, possessed of reason], which is what

it bore at the time when our Authorized Version and Prayer-Book were composed. The like may be said of the word "lively," which formerly signified "living." And both these words occur in their ancient sense in one of the Post-Communion Prayers.

The words "prevent" and "let," again, have almost reversed the signification in which we sometimes find them in the older writings, though they are quite as much in use as ever. And the word "incomprehensible" is not unfrequent in modern use, though in a sense utterly remote from what it bears in the Athanasian Creed, as equivalent to the Latin original "immensus," "*not bounded by space.*" One may meet with not a few among what are considered the educated classes, who accordingly misunderstand the word, and in consequence the whole passage where it occurs.

And universally, those words must evidently be the most likely to mislead which are not totally obsolete, but obsolete in their ancient sense, though commonly used by us in a different sense.

The wholly obsolete words are likely to convey *no* meaning at all, and the others to convey a *wrong* meaning. To take one instance out of a multitude: I have known the writer of a book find fault with a passage in our 21st Article, which lays it down that doctrines or decisions of a Council are not to be received as of authority, "unless it may be *declared* that they be taken out of Holy Scripture." This, he says, affords us no sufficient security, unless the question be satisfactorily answered, "declared by whom?" He evidently understands the word "declare" in its modern sense. But any one who consults the Latin Original will see that it is the translation of "*ostendi*," and that it is employed in its ancient meaning, which was to "*make clear*," to "prove."*

On the ambiguity of the word "*Hell*," which is a translation of two quite different words in Greek, I have above offered some remarks. Many like instances will readily occur to you; such

* Again, important errors have arisen from taking the word "allow" in its modern sense, instead of its original one, to "approve." (See Rom. 15. vii.)

as "faithful" for "believing;" "*wealth*," in the sense of "prosperity;" "*estate*," for "external circumstances;" "*convenient*," for "proper and becoming;" "*after*," for "according to;" "passion," for "suffering;" "offend," and "tempt," in a sense considerably different from what they now convey; and several others.

Explanatory Teaching the least admired.

§ 13. Such expositions as I have been recommending, it will be advisable to give, not merely in discourses from the pulpit, but also in private conversation, and especially in instruction of catechetical classes.* This last branch of our duty is one which no rightly conscientious pastor will be content to hand over altogether to a parish schoolmaster, or to such chance-assistants as may offer themselves; however competent these may be to teach children to *read* correctly the words of the Bible and the Prayer-Book.

* A very useful course of lectures on this subject has been published by the Rev. H. H. Dickinson. (Parker, West Strand.)

I cannot conclude, however, without again giving a warning that that branch of our duty which I have now been treating of, is one which we must not expect to find the most striking in its immediate results, or which will be, to a considerable portion of our congregations, the most interesting, or the most productive of admiration. It is for that very reason that it is the more needful, for all of us to take every precaution against the temptations to neglect what is clearly a part, and a very important part, of our duty. And such instruction as I have been recommending, will, if diligently and skilfully conducted, produce effects, gradual indeed, and somewhat slow, but deep-rooted and of lasting benefit.

If we find that our sermons are very attractive to that portion especially of our congregations who care for little *except* the sermon—who seldom or never approach the Lord's Table, and who are negligent in all that relates to public *worship*, this should operate on us rather as a warning than as a source of self-gratulation. If, on the contrary, we find our

people more and more careful not to absent themselves from the early portion of divine Service—more and more attentive and earnestly devout in their demeanour, and apparently impressed deeply with a sense of the high privilege they enjoy in our Lord's gracious promise of his own especial presence in the midst of those "assembled in his name," and "agreeing together touching something they shall ask;" and if we find an increased and increasing number of habitual attendants at the Lord's Supper, then, indeed, we may confidently hope that the Lord's blessing has been bestowed on our exertions—that we have been in some degree successful as feeders of his beloved flock which He has committed to our care; and that when He, the Chief Shepherd, shall appear, we shall have a joyful meeting in his presence with many whom we shall have brought, or have kept, within his Fold.

NOTES TO LECTURE III.

Note C.

These words are taken from an able writer in the *Cautions for the Times*, No. 24. The whole passage is here subjoined:—

"In thus insisting on the claims of the appointed "teachers of the Church, we may possibly have appeared "to some of you unduly to exalt the christian ministry, "and to approach too near the Romish notions of the "dignity of the priesthood. But you will perceive, on "reflection, that the very reverse is the case. Many of "those who pay less deference than we think they ought, "to the teaching of Church-officers, do in reality ap- "proach, far more than we do, to the Romish notions as "to the functions of these officers. For there are some "who, while they think themselves quite justified in "chusing their *teachers* as they please, would consider "it wrong that the public Prayers of the Church should "be conducted by any but regularly ordained clergy- "men; or who, at any rate, would be shocked to receive "the Sacraments from any other. Now, does not this "feeling imply a persuasion that it is not teaching, but "officiating before God, which forms the distinguishing "function of the christian Ministry? In the case, "indeed, of *heathen* priests, it is true that the offering "of sacrifices was *their* sole duty, and that the giving "of instruction was no part of their office. And so "likewise in the case of the Jewish priests; their "peculiar office was the making atonement for the sins "of the People; while Jews of any tribe were freely

"admitted to expound the Scripture in the Synagogues. "(See Luke iv., and Acts xiii.) You are aware, also, "that in the Romish Church similar views are enter- "tained as to the priestly office, and that what consti- "tutes with them the distinguishing function of the "priest is the power of consecrating the Eucharist, and "thereby, as they believe, offering up sacrifice for the "living and the dead. But it is very remarkable, that "in the Bible the word *Hiereus* (or sacrificing priest, "in Latin, "sacerdos") is applied to no officer of the "christian Church, but is reserved for our Lord exclu- "sively. The sacrifice offered on Calvary is expressly "declared to be final, and one which needs not to be "followed by any other atonement; and the duties "ascribed to the christian Ministers are not the making "atonement for the sins of the People, but the pro- "claiming the Gospel-Message, and the setting forth "of its doctrines. If then we meet with a person who "behaves as if he thought that all had equal authority "for public teaching, while he acknowledges that all "have not equal authority to minister in the public "Ordinances of the Church, is he not unconsciously "entertaining views regarding the christian Ministry "more nearly resembling those which the heathens and "the Jews held, and which the Romanists still hold, "with regard to their priests, than any which can be "fairly collected from the New Testament?—that he "must consider the priest as one who is to do something "with God on his behalf, or in his stead, rather than "as one whose principal office is the communicating "instruction to the People?"

Note D.

The same observations will apply to the case of *subscription* to any Formulary, whether a Liturgy, or a "Creed," "Articles of Religion," or "Confession of Faith." Those belonging to some Communion which

uses nothing of the kind,—that is, nothing *formally agreed on*, written down, and *published*,—sometimes make it a matter of boast that they have no test of orthodoxy framed by Man, but refer only to the Holy Scriptures. They do, however, in some way, ascertain the soundness, according to their own views, of each Man's interpretation of Scripture; so that the only difference between them and us is, that they trust *everything* to the discretion of those who act as examiners—the TRYERS, as they were called in the times of the Commonwealth.

Yet they may allege objections, to an indefinite extent, against any written Formularies; safe from having any precisely similar objections retorted; because the blame of anything that may be open to blame is laid on *individuals*, and not on the Church which leaves to those individuals an unlimited, and perhaps unsafe, discretion.

There is, however, (as was observed in the *Cautions for the Times*, No. 26), "no Christian community which "does not, in some way or other, apply some other test "besides the very words of Scripture. Some Churches, "indeed, do not reduce any such Test to writing, or "express it in any *fixed* form, so as to enable every one "to know beforehand precisely how much he will be "required to bind himself to. But nevertheless, those "churches do apply a test, and very often a much more "stringent, elaborate, and minute test, than our Liturgy "and Articles. In such Communities, the candidate-"pastor of a Congregation is not, to be sure, called on "to subscribe in writing a definite confession of Faith, "drawn up by learned and pious persons after mature "deliberation, and publicly set forth by common "authority. But he is called upon to converse with "the leading members of the Congregation, and satisfy "them as to the soundness of his views; not, of course, "by merely repeating texts of Scripture,—which a "man of any views might do, and do honestly;—but

"by explaining *the sense* in which he understands the "Scriptures. Thus, instead of subscribing the Thirty-"nine Articles, he subscribes the sentiments of the "leading members—for the time being—of that par-"ticular congregation over which He is to be placed as "Teacher.

"And thus it is that Tests of some kind or other, "written or unwritten, [*i.e.*, transmitted by oral tradi-"tion,] fixed for the whole Body, or variable, according "to the discretion of particular Governors, are, and "must be, used in every Christian Church."

Note E.

"*An Address to the People of Dublin.*

"My Christian Friends,—There is a matter to which "I wish to call your attention, the more, because my "belief is that it is from want of attention alone that the "evil I wish to remedy has arisen. I am addressing "myself to those only who have both a sense of religion, "and a conviction of the duty of assembling for the "purpose of public worship. I have not in view at "present those who habitually absent themselves from "divine Service, but those whose attendance is so late "and irregular as to indicate a want of due regard for "the solemnity of the occasion and the place, and for "the feelings of the rest of the congregation.

"All religiously disposed persons who have lived "much in England are much and painfully struck "at the contrast they observe between what they "have been used to at home, and what they see here. "They see, indeed, that our churches are frequented by "numerous, and often by crowded, congregations; but "they observe, at the same time, that usually not above "two-thirds—sometimes not above half—of each con-"gregation is assembled when the Service begins; and "that a large portion of them come dropping in, a few

"at a time, during the Prayers, during the Psalms, and "during the Lessons, or even after the reading of the "Lessons. Now I do not mean to say that no instances "of such irregularity take place in the English churches. "They are not, unhappily, exempt from this scandal. "But if I were to say that it exists in a fourfold greater "degree in Ireland, I believe I should be much within "compass.

"There are cases, no doubt,—though not more in "Ireland than in England,—in which, for some few in- "dividuals, there is a valid excuse for such late atten- "dance. A medical man, for instance, may be called on "for some pressing case at the very time the Service is "commencing; and others may occasionally be detained "by similar indispensable avocations. And for them it "is undoubtedly better to come in in the middle of the "Service than not at all. But I am addressing myself "to those—and they must evidently be the great majo- "rity—who have no such plea to offer. And I cannot "but hope that the greater part of these have never re- "flected on the indecorum I allude to, and when they "do come to consider the subject attentively, will set "themselves to amend the fault.

"Reflect, then, I earnestly entreat you, for what pur- "pose you do come to church at all: you assemble to "'render God thanks for the great benefits that we have "received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy "praise, to hear his most Holy Word, and to ask those "things which are requisite and necessary, as well for "the body as the soul.' It is not, I trust, merely for "the sake of having your ears gratified by the eloquence "of a preacher: and that, too, without even seeking to "profit by what he says; for if the minister you listen to "be a faithful and truly edifying one, he will not fail to "set before you strongly, from time to time, the gracious "promise of his divine Master, that where even 'two "or three are gathered together in his name, there will "He be in the midst of them;' and that where even 'two

"or three of his Disciples shall agree together touching "something they shall ask of the Father in his name' "(supposing, of course, that He sees it will really be for "their good), their prayer shall be heard. And a faith- "ful preacher will not fail to remind his people, among "other duties, how carefully and how thankfully they "are bound to avail themselves of such gracious pro- "mises and offers.

"Deeply mortifying must it be to such a minister, to "find that many of those who hear him, and who come "again and again to hear him, Sunday after Sunday, are "yet so little impressed, practically, with all this, that "they lay themselves open to such a rebuke as the "Apostle Paul was compelled to administer to the "Corinthians for an indecorum of another kind: 'ye "come together not for the better, but for the worse.'

"Now, suppose you were favoured with the admis- "sion to some regal Court, and permitted to pay your "respects to an earthly sovereign, to present petitions "to him, to hear him address you, and to be honoured "with his commands,—do you think it likely that you "would be late in your attendance?—that you would "drop in when great part of the Audience was over, so "as not only yourself to miss much of what was to be "heard and said, but also to disturb and interrupt the "rest of the persons present?

"But, perhaps, some one may be disposed to say, an "earthly king can really derive gratification from the "honours paid him, and his subjects may even do him "valuable services; whereas the Most High cannot "really be honoured or benefited by his creatures. This "is true; and it applies as much to *private* prayer as to "public worship; so that, if it be offered as a reason for "the neglect of the one, it would be equally so in refe- "rence to the other also. And you should observe, too, "that it applies as much to *all our conduct* as to our "worship. For we are sure that God can have no *need* "of our services of any kind: 'Can a man be profitable

"unto God as he that is wise may be profitable unto "himself?. Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou "art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest "thy way perfect?' 'If thou sinnest, what doest thou "against Him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, "what doest thou unto Him? If thou be righteous, "what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He of thine "hand?' (Job xxii. 2, 3, and 35-37.)

"But though all this be so, still we know that, by "divine appointment, it is *not* a matter of indifference "how we act or speak. Although God cannot, in reality, "derive either advantage or honour from us, He has "directed us to *act as if* we *could* glorify and benefit "Him. The Lord Jesus has declared that our works of "charity to our brethren will be accepted as if done to "Himself: 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye "have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, "ye have done it unto Me.' And He has commanded "us to 'let our light so shine before men that they "may see our good works, and glorify our Father who "is in heaven.' And thus, again, the Apostle Paul "says: 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye "do, *do all to the glory of God.*'

"So also, in the Old Testament, the Lord calls Him-"self a '*jealous* God;' and declares, 'Them that honour "Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be "lightly esteemed.'

"By all this we are to understand, that we are re-"quired to act in all respects as we should towards a "benefactor who could really be honoured and served "by us; with additional gratitude from the considera-"tion that He requires this of us entirely for our own "and our fellow-creatures' good.

"Do not, then, regard it as a trifling matter if you "manifest an irreverent carelessness in your attendance "on public worship. To yourselves, and also to your "neighbours, it is no trifle. The interruption and "annoyance occasioned to regular and devout worship-

"pers is what would be reckoned in any other matter a "mark of ill-breeding. In this case it is something "beyond ill-breeding. And the irreligious, again, or "those who are of some different Persuasion from "yours, will be likely to take notice of such indecorous "conduct, and to draw the natural inference from it. "Any kind of carelessness manifested by the wor- "shippers who belong to our Church is likely to be re- "garded as an evidence, as far as it goes, either against "religion in general, or against our Church in particular. "'See, how little importance,' it will be said, 'is "attached by these people to what they themselves "profess to believe and to adhere to.'

"Let me hope, therefore, that a general and united "effort will be made to wipe off this reproach from our "Church, and from this country. But if any individual "despair of this being effected, to such a one I would "say,—Take care that at least you individually shall "henceforth deserve no share in the reproach; secure "to yourself the inward satisfaction of acting in such a "manner that if all others would do the same, the evil "complained of would be completely removed.

"Your sincere friend and servant in Christ,

"Richard Dublin."

LECTURE IV.

ON BAPTISM.

As it was not my design in these Lectures to bring forward any novel views, but to set forth, as plainly as possible, and to support by Scripture-proofs, what I conceive to be the teaching of our Church and of its most approved Ministers, I have taken the liberty of quoting largely from the Writings of some well-known Divines. Not that our Church is—as a Church—responsible for what is said by individual members of it; or that either it, or they, have any claim to infallibility. But some degree of deference is certainly due to the judgments of those who are generally regarded as pious and sound Divines; especially when treating of matters concerning which there have been recent controversies, when what they have said was written long before those controversies had arisen. Even those who may

not agree with them, and with me, will at least see that there is no *novelty* in the doctrines maintained.

And, in referring to our Formularies, I have considered not only the deference due to such men as our Reformers, but also the obligation lying on Ministers and other members of the Church, to interpret its words fairly, as long as they remain in connexion with it, and to abstain from torturing its language into a non-natural sense, at variance with the manifest and known intention of the authors. And most especially should those who the most vehemently denounce persons of an opposite party for this disingenuous procedure, set an example themselves (which unhappily many of them have not done) of fairness of interpretation, and honest conformity to the decisions of the Church.

To Scripture, however, the ultimate appeal must be made, as the only infallible guide; and I have endeavoured in these Lectures to put forward, as plainly as possible, what appears to me a most important principle in the interpretation

of Scripture: namely, not to be satisfied with any sense whatever that the words can be brought to bear, but to seek for that in which they were originally designed and believed to be understood.

In interpreting the Sacred Writers, generally, and not least in deciding whether some passage is to be *taken literally, or figuratively*, it is evidently of the first importance to look to the meaning which the expression appears to have conveyed, at the time, *to the persons addressed.* This will not always be what might appear to *us*, in a distant Age and Country, the most obvious sense. But whatever sense the words conveyed to the hearers, we may fairly presume to be the true one, unless some correction was furnished (either immediately or afterwards) of any mistake into which they might have fallen. For we can hardly suppose that the inspired Writers were not aware in what sense they would be understood by those they addressed, or that they would knowingly leave them in error, at least on any point of practical importance.

When, for instance, our Lord spoke of Lazarus "sleeping," He was understood at the moment to be speaking literally; and He thereupon explained Himself. On the other hand, when He spoke of his own "death and resurrection," the Disciples thought He must be speaking figuratively, because the literal fulfilment of his words was utterly at variance with all their expectations. But the *event* shortly after removed their mistake.

Again, when Jesus spoke of "rebuilding this temple in three days," some may have understood Him at the time to be speaking of the literal Temple: but we find that his Disciples, after the resurrection, had learned the right meaning of his words.

So, also, the prophecy of his "coming in his kingdom," before the end of the existing generation, seems to have been understood by many as relating to the end of the World: and this belief seems to be alluded to by the Apostle Paul, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians. But this misapprehension would cure itself, by the mere circumstance of

men's seeing that the World did *not* come to an end.

In all cases, then, we may consider that there is a strong presumption, where nothing appears to the contrary, that *the sense in which a passage of Scripture, relating to any important matter, was understood at the time, is the true sense of it.*

Verbal Controversy.

§ 1. It is not my design to enter on a full discussion of all the questions that have so long agitated the Church, on the subject of Regeneration, and those connected with that. But there is one circumstance pertaining to them which it is most important to point out, and to insist on: which is, that among many persons (I do not say *all*) who are, in language, very much opposed to each other on this subject, the opposition is much greater in appearance than in reality. They are engaged, without being aware of it, in a controversy chiefly, if not altogether, *verbal*.

Now it must be regarded by all who

have anything of a genuine christian spirit, as a most desirable object to obviate as far as possible all unnecessary dissension among Christians, and to bring to a mutual good understanding, as nearly as can be done without compromise of truth, all "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

For, besides the immediate evils to those who are themselves engaged in any controversy, there is this additional danger also to the christian People generally, that many of them may be disposed to say, "Here are questions which are declared by all to be of vital importance, yet on which the most learned Divines are not agreed. If men apparently pious, and of far greater knowledge and ability than ours, find so much difficulty in agreeing as to the sense of Scripture on points which they regard as of vital importance, what is, to them, a difficulty, must be to us an impossibility; and Scripture can therefore contain no *Revelation*, properly so called; or at least no revelation to the mass of mankind." And the result of these reflections will often be, that some

will betake themselves to some supposed infallible Church, or other guide, to whose dictates they will implicitly resign themselves; while others will be, by the same course, led into infidelity.* They see that there *is* no infallible, and universally accessible, guide on earth; and moreover, that if there were, it could not possibly be *ascertained*, by men incompetent (by supposition) to exercise their private judgment, and who consequently could never have any good reason for trusting their judgment to decide rightly that most difficult question,—*who* is the appointed guide? and they consequently reject the belief of any divine revelation at all.

It is doubly important therefore to point out—where this can be done with truth—how far difficulties and disputes may have been created, or aggravated, by Theologians themselves; either from their seeking to explain more than God has thought fit to reveal,† or from interpret-

* See *Sermon on the Search after Infallibility:* and *Lessons on Religious Worship*, L. VI.

† See *Sermon on the "Shepherds at Bethlehem:"* and also *Lessons on Religious Worship*, L. VII.

ing Scripture according to the technical phraseology of some theological school, or from overlooking variations in the senses in which several words are employed, and thus introducing undetected verbal controversy, and consequent confusion of thought.

The terms "regenerate" and "regeneration" [or New-birth] are commonly employed (as I have remarked in a Work which has been now for many years well known to the Public) in different senses by different persons.* "Regeneration" denotes, in the language of some, merely that *admission* to christian privileges and advantages, which is the necessary *preliminary* to a christian life. Others employ the term to signify the condition into which a man is brought by that *use* of those advantages and privileges which constitutes a decided christian character. And "regenerate," accordingly, is applied by those persons respectively, to conditions as widely different as that of a newborn infant, and that of a fully-formed adult.

Logic, Appendix: Article, "Regeneration."

Without attempting to enter on a minute discussion of all the modifications of meaning that have ever been attached to these words, we may at least recognize the actual employment of them in the two widely-different senses just mentioned. And not only by different persons, but sometimes even by the same, these words (as well as several others) will be found to be occasionally used with different significations. Undesignedly, and unconsciously, a person will sometimes, even at a short interval, slide from one meaning to another, of some of the expressions he is employing.

Now whatever may be the importance of adhering to the most correct use of any term, and whichever may be, in this case, the more correct, it is surely the first point—the first in order, and the first also in importance—to perceive distinctly the ambiguity that does actually exist, and to keep clear of the many injurious misapprehensions which may arise from attributing to those who use a term in one sense, conclusions which depend on its being taken in a different sense.

For example, a person may be exposed to a groundless imputation of leading men into a vain and dangerous reliance on baptismal privileges, and of teaching them that all who have been duly baptized are in a safe state; when perhaps in fact he may have never said or implied any such thing, but may have merely been employing the word "regenerate" according to what *he* regards as the most scriptural usage; and then, has had imputed to him inferences which *would* have followed if he had employed that word in quite another sense. And perhaps it may turn out on calm investigation, that such a person, and some who had been at first disposed very strongly to censure him, do not in reality disagree to any considerable extent, as to the substance of the doctrines they maintain.

I have seen something like the above imputation thrown out in a Work which several years ago obtained considerable popularity. It was professedly a description (veiled under a slight tale) of various prevailing religious opinions and modes of conduct: and some of the pictures

drawn were both striking and just. But among others, a careless clergyman is introduced deprecating any anxiety felt by any of his People as to their spiritual state, and saying that "of course all Christians will be saved; and whoever is baptised is a Christian." Now I feel certain, from long experience and attentive observation, that there is no ground whatever for the imputation here conveyed. I mean, that it is not true (as is evidently designed to be implied) that there exists any party, school, or class of men, among our Clergy,—even the worst of them—who teach such a doctrine. Yet it is probable that the representation was not a designed calumny, but was merely an "idle word," originating in a misconception such as I have been alluding to, as the result of a hasty and inconsiderate interpretation of another's expressions, and of rash inferences therefrom.

Points of Agreement between those at variance in Expression.

§ 2. Let any one then but consider—and this is an inquiry well-becoming those who would cherish a spirit of chris-

tian charity—how much there may be of agreement, and that, on the most essential practical points, between men who, at the first glance, might appear widely opposed, and who perhaps are inclined to think hardly of each other.

Two persons accustomed to employ, respectively, the word "regeneration" in the different senses just alluded to, may agree in reverencing the Rite of Baptism, and in administering it according to the same rules: both may be also accustomed to warn men against placing an indolent confidence in Gospel-privileges, and to teach them that to have been enrolled as members of Christ's Church is an advantage for the use of which we are responsible, and which will but increase the condemnation of such as do not "walk worthy of their vocation." Both may teach that (in the words of our 16th Article) "after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin; and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives."*

* Some Divines of the present day (professedly of our Church) express doubts, nearly, if not completely,

And they may agree in teaching that "God desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live;" and in exhorting every one who does live a careless, an irreligious, or a vicious life, to repent, and seek divine mercy through Christ, and strength to accomplish a thorough reformation: though, in many instances, to the same sort of change which the one of these instructors would call "regeneration" or "new-birth," the other might apply the terms "conversion," "revival,"

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amounting to a denial of the doctrine of this Article; teaching that sins committed after Baptism are either totally unpardonable, or are to be atoned for by Penance. Should such views prevail, they may be expected to lead first to a rejection of infant-baptism, and afterwards to the practice (not unfrequent in the early Church) of deferring Baptism to the death-bed.

It would be thought by many, a cruelty to place a person *without his own consent*, and in unconscious infancy, in a situation, so far, much more disadvantageous than that of those brought up Pagans, that if he did ever—suppose at the age of fifteen, or twenty—fall into any sin, he must remain for the rest of his life—perhaps for above half a century—deprived of all hope, or at least of all confident hope, of restoration to the divine favour; shut out from all that cheering prospect which, if his baptism in infancy *had been omitted*, might have lain before him.

"renewal," &c. Both might agree in teaching that a holy life is the test of effectual, profitable regeneration, and in exhorting all men to lead such a life. On this—the important practical point,—they would not differ at all.

Now if this be so, it cannot but be desirable that men should be at least guarded against supposing themselves (through the influence of the language they employ) to be *more* at variance than they really are. And it is accordingly a point of christian duty, when any such occasion arises, to point out the danger of such an error, and thus to promote reconcilement, or at least mitigate hostility, between those engaged in any controversy.

Points of Disagreement not verbal.

§ 3. But though some are liable to be engaged (in reference to these points) in a controversy chiefly verbal, there are others, as was above hinted, between whom an apparently similar controversy will be found to turn on a real opposition of doctrine.

Those who hold that (1) of persons duly

admitted into the visible Church by baptism, some are, by an absolute eternal divine decree, secured in all the benefits of Christ's redemption, and others, totally excluded therefrom by the same decree, and morever (2) that this is a truth *set forth in Scripture* as an essential point of faith;* these, and the parties opposed to them, must, of course, differ, not in words only, but in the matter of their teaching.

Taking Regeneration to imply (as is generally agreed) *some* kind and degree of benefit—some spiritual gift, or at least *offer* of a gift—they of course deny the term "regenerate" to be at all applicable to those Christians whom they consider as excluded by the decree of Omnipotence from all spiritual benefit whatever of Baptism. And the Visible Church, into which members are through this Rite admitted, they must regard as a community not possessing any spiritual endowments whatever; these being, by divine decree, reserved for certain individuals arbitrarily selected from the rest.

Of those who maintain—or at least in

* See Note F at the end of this Lecture.

their teaching imply—the predestinarian views now alluded to, a considerable portion belong to the Sect which altogether rejects Infant-baptism. And in this I cannot but admit that they are perfectly consistent. Regarding the Rite of Baptism as "an outward and visible *Sign* of an inward spiritual grace" they deem it not allowable, I apprehend, to "put asunder what God has joined together;" and therefore confine the administration of this sign to those respecting whom there is some presumption at least, of their being admitted to a participation in *the thing signified*—the divine grace; which grace, they hold, is, by an eternal absolute decree, bestowed on one portion of those professing Christianity, and denied to the rest. And to which of the two classes any individual *infant* belongs, there cannot possibly be any ground for even the slightest conjecture.

In the case of an adult they *can* have, it is supposed, (just as in the case of the other Sacrament, the Lord's Supper)—if not a complete and certain knowledge whether he belongs to the Class of the

Elect or the Non-elect,—at least some indication from his professions and his conduct; indications which an infant, of course, cannot afford. And they accordingly consider, I apprehend, that Baptism administered to infants cannot be a Sign of Regeneration, since there cannot be even any presumption of its being accompanied by any spiritual advantage at all:

And certainly it must be admitted that according at least to the ordinary use of language, a *Sign* of anything is understood to be such, from its being regularly accompanied by that thing of which it is a sign, or at least, by some reasonable presumption of its presence. When, for instance, we speak of a certain dress or badge being a sign of a man's belonging to a certain Regiment, or Order of Knighthood, or the like, we understand that it is to be something *peculiarly* belonging to them, and serving to distinguish them from others. If a dress, or badge, were worn indifferently by an indefinite number of persons, some belonging to this Regiment or Order, and some not, we should consider that it had ceased to be a *sign* at all, hav-

ing no longer any *signification*. It is on these grounds, I conceive, that many of those who hold that doctrine of absolute decrees I have been alluding to, adhere to, or have joined, the communion of those calling themselves, and commonly called, Baptists.

Archbishop Sumner's Opinions on these Points.

§ 4. In reference to the subject here treated of, I take the liberty of extracting a passage from a Work which has been for many years well known, and highly esteemed, by the Public.

"Another practical evil of the doctrine of special grace, is the necessity which it implies of some test of God's favour, and of the reconcilement of Christians to Him, beyond and subsequent to the covenant of baptism. St. Paul, it has been seen, insists upon the necessity of regeneration: he declares that 'the natural man *receiveth not the things of God, neither can know them:*' he calls the heathen nations '*children of wrath*,' and '*sinners of the Gentiles:*' he speaks of the '*old man* as *being corrupt* according to the deceitful lusts:

in short, he expresses, under a variety of terms,* the assertion of our Saviour, that 'except a man be born again, of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' John iii. 3.

"With equal clearness he intimates, that the Christians he addresses *were* thus regenerate: as having '*put off the old man* with its deeds;' and having become the 'temple of the *Holy Ghost*,' and 'the *members of Christ;*' as having the '*spiritual circumcision*, and being *buried* with Christ *in baptism ;*' [Rom. vi. 3; Col. ii. 12;] as having '*received the spirit of adoption*,' [Rom. viii. 15;] and as 'being *washed*, *sanctified*, *and justified*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' To the Galatians, 'bewitched,' as he says they were, 'that they should not obey the truth,' he still writes, 'Ye are the *children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus.' 'For, as many of you as *have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.*' (Gal. iii. 26.) These addresses and exhortations are founded on the principle that the Disciples, by their dedication to God in baptism,

* Rom. ii. 6, &c.

had been brought into a state of reconcilement with Him, had been admitted to privileges which the Apostle calls on them to improve. On the authority of this example, and of the undeniable practice of the first ages of Christianity, our Church considers Baptism as conveying regeneration, instructing us to pray, before baptism, that the infant 'may be *born again*, and made an heir of everlasting salvation;' and to return thanks, after baptism, 'that it *hath* pleased God to *regenerate* the infant with his Holy Spirit, and receive him for his own child by adoption.'

"But, on the contrary, if there is a distinction between special and common grace, and none are regenerate but those who receive special grace, and those only receive it who are elect; baptism is evidently no sign of regeneration, since so many after baptism live profane and unholy lives, and perish in their sins. Therefore, the preacher of special grace must, consistently with his own principles, lead his hearers to look for some new conversion, and expect some sensible regeneration. This brings him to use

language in the highest degree perplexing to an ordinary hearer. To take an example from the same writer, whose only fault is the inconsistency to which he is reduced by his attachment to the system of election: 'The best duties of unregenerate men are no better in God's account and acceptance, than abomination. There is nothing that such men do, in the whole course of their lives, but at the last day it will be found in God's register-book, among the catalogue of their sins. This man hath prayed so often, and heard so often; made so many prayers, and heard so many sermons, and done many good works; but yet, all this while, he was in an unconverted estate: these, therefore, are set down in God's day-book in black; and they are registered among those sins that he must give an account for: not for the *substance of the actions* themselves, but because they come from rotten principles, that defile the best actions which he can perform.'*

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* Hopkins *on the New Birth.*

"Suppose this language addressed now, as it was originally, to a congregation dedicated to Christ in baptism. What would be the feelings of a plain understanding, or a timid conscience, unable to unravel the windings of these secret things, on learning that the sinfulness or innocency of actions does not depend upon their being permitted or forbidden in the revealed law, but on the doer being in a regenerate or unregenerate state at the time when he performs them? How is this fact of *regeneracy*, upon which no less than eternity depends, to be discovered? The Apostle enumerates the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit; but his test is insufficient, for the two lists are here mixed and confounded. The hearers appeal to the Church, an authorized interpreter of Scripture. The Church acquaints them, that they were themselves regenerated, and made the children of grace, by the benefit of Baptism; while the preacher evidently treats them as if it were possible they might be still unregenerate."*

* Sumner's *Apostolical Preaching.*

§ 5. It seems not unlikely that the same cause which had probably led to the rejection of infant baptism, contributed also to the formation of that Sect which rejects the Sacraments altogether. At the time when that Sect arose, a very large proportion of christian ministers, while they were administering to infants a Rite which they spoke of as a sign of Regeneration, (or New-birth,) at the same time taught—at least, were understood as teaching—that there is no intelligible connexion whatever between the sign and the thing signified, nor any real benefit attached to the Rite. The new-birth they taught their people to hope for at some future indefinite time. And they taught them to believe, as a part of the christian revelation, that, of infants brought to baptism, an uncertain, indefinite number of individuals—*undistinguishable* at that time from the rest—are, by the divine decree, totally and finally excluded from all share in the benefits of Christ's redemption.

Probable Origin of the Rejection of the Sacraments.

Now, men accustomed to see and hear

all this, would be not unlikely to listen with favour to those who declared—professedly by divine inspiration—that "water-baptism," as they call it, is an empty and superstitious ceremony, originating in a misapprehension of our Lord's meaning; of which meaning they—gifted with the same inspiration as his Apostles—are commissioned to be interpreters.

And when one Sacrament had been thus explained away, the rejection of the other also, according to a similar kind of reasoning, would follow of course.

And, after all, this rejection was but the carrying out of a principle of procedure which had been long before sanctioned by others. It had been long before decided that, at the Eucharist, one of the appointed symbols might safely be omitted, and that the perfect spiritual participation by the Communicants in the benefit of the Sacrament is not thereby at all impaired. To dispense with the other symbol also, and likewise with the symbol of the other Sacrament, and then to call this a spiritual celebration of the Sacraments, was only taking a step further in the same direction.

In truth, the abolition of the Sacraments, by explaining away as figurative, words of our Lord which were undoubtedly understood by his hearers at the time literally; or, again, the literal interpretation of his words, "this is my body," which must have been understood at the time figuratively, (for the Apostles could not have supposed that at the Last Supper He was holding in his hands his own literal body;) or the addition of fresh Sacraments not instituted by Him or his Apostles; or a departure from the mode He appointed of celebrating the Eucharist, by the withholding of the cup, —all these, and any other similar liberties taken with Scripture, stand on the same ground, and are equally justifiable, or equally unjustifiable. If certain individuals, or Councils, or other Bodies of men, are really inspired messengers from Heaven, "moved by the Spirit" to declare with infallible certainty the Will of the Lord, then their words are to be received and obeyed with the same deference as those of Peter or Paul. And if they announce any change in the divine dis-

pensations, or give any new interpretation of any part of Scripture, we are bound to acquiesce, even as the Jews were required to do in that great "mystery of the Gospel," the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven to Gentiles. It is God who speaks by their mouths; and he who has established any ordinance has evidently the power to abrogate or alter it.

And when persons who make such a claim (or admit it in their leaders) profess to take Scripture for their guide, they must be understood to mean that it is their guide only in the sense attached to it by the persons thus divinely commissioned, and in those points only wherein no additional or different revelation has been made through these persons. When there has, the *later* revelation, of course, supersedes the earlier.

Nor does it make any real difference whether something be added to the Bible, claiming equal divine authority, or whether merely an alleged infallible *interpretation* be given of what is already written. For an interpretation coming from any Church or person divinely com-

missioned, and speaking "as the Spirit moveth," and thence authorized to declare (which is exactly an equivalent expression) "*thus saith the Lord*," is of the same authority with Scripture itself, and must be implicitly received, however at variance with the sense which any ordinary reader would, of himself, attach to the words. And those who completely surrender their own judgment to any supposed infallible interpreter, are, in fact, taking him—not Scripture—for their guide.

It is most important,—when the expression is used of "referring to Scripture as the infallible standard," and requiring assent to such points of faith only as can be thence proved,—to settle clearly in the outset, the important question "proved *to whom?*" If any man, or Body of men refer us to Scripture, as the sole authoritative standard, meaning that we are not to be called on to believe anything as a necessary point of faith, on their word, but only on *our own* conviction that it is scriptural, then, they place our faith on the basis, not of human authority, but of

divine. But if they call on *us*, as a point of conscience, to receive whatever is proved to *their* satisfaction from Scripture, even though it may appear to *us* unscriptural, then, instead of releasing us from the usurped authority of Man taking the place of God, they are placing on us two burdens instead of one. "You require us," we might reply, "to believe, first, that whatever you teach is *true;* and, secondly, besides this, to believe also, that it is a truth *contained in Scripture;* and we are to *take your word* for both!"

When, therefore, any such claim is set up, we are authorized and bound to require "the signs of an Apostle." One who supports his opinions by *argument*, is at least entitled to a hearing, however wide those opinions may be from what are generally held. But it is not so with those who claim assent on the ground of having received a revelation from the infallible Spirit of God. Professed ambassadors from Heaven should be called on to show their *credentials*—the miraculous powers which alone can prove their inspiration—on pain of being convicted of

profane presumption in daring to say, "THUS SAITH THE LORD, when the Lord hath not spoken."

There are some persons, however, who bewilder themselves and others, by confounding together the two senses of the word "inspiration." In one sense, everything that is true, and that is good, in the Christian, may be said to be from the "inspiration of the Holy Spirit," which we pray for to "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts;"* since, "without Me," says our Lord, "ye can do nothing." But this inspiration is what can only be known by its fruits, to be judged of by comparing our life and doctrine with Scripture.

When, on the other hand, we speak of the Apostles as "INSPIRED WRITERS," we understand by that, that they had received a communication from Heaven; of the *infallible* truth of which, they themselves, and all others could be assured.

It is probable, again, that many persons deceive both others and themselves by confusing together in their minds differences of *degree*, and differences of *amount;*

* *Communion Service.*

and thence imagining (what a little calm reflection must show to be impossible, and, indeed, unintelligible) that there may be different *degrees* of what is properly and strictly termed INSPIRATION: that is, the *miraculous* influence under which we conceive anything that we call "an inspired Work" to have been written. The existence or non-existence of this inspiration is a question of *fact;* and though there may be different degrees of *evidence for* the existence of a fact, it is plain that one fact cannot be, itself, more or less a fact than another.

Inspiration may extend either to the very words uttered, or merely to the subject-matter of them, or merely to a certain portion of the matter;—to all, for instance, that pertains to *religious* truth, so as to afford a complete exemption from doctrinal error—though not, to matters of Geography, Natural Philosophy, &c. But in every case we understand that to whatever points the inspiration does extend, in these it secures *infallibility;* and infallibility manifestly cannot admit of *degrees.*

When we are speaking of the instructive, the eloquent, the entertaining, &c., we may call one discourse tolerably well-written, another rather better written, and a third better still. Each of them is what it is, in a different degree from the others. But we could not with propriety speak of one discourse as being "somewhat inspired," another, as "rather more inspired," and again, another, as "a good deal inspired."

If any one is distinctly commissioned to deliver a message from Heaven, in any one instance, with infallible proof to himself and to others, that it is such, he is as truly inspired, and his revelation as much a revelation, as if he had had revealed to him a hundred times a greater *quantity* of superhuman knowledge. *That* one message is as much God's Word as any part of Scripture. Even so Paul, who "spoke with tongues more than all" the disciples he was addressing,* had not *more* that miraculous gift (though he had the gift of *more* tongues) than any one of them

* 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

who had been supernaturally taught a single foreign language.

If a man has ascertained, and can prove, that he has had, either in words, or merely in substance, a revelation (properly so-called) of some doctrine, or again, an infallible divine assurance of safety from religious errors, he is to be listened to—in reference *to those points to which the inspiration extends*—as speaking with divine authority. But on the other hand, if he has no infallible proofs to give of having received a divine communication, then, though most or all of what he says may be, in fact, perfectly true, he has no right to use such an expression as "thus saith the LORD!" or "the Spirit moveth me to say so and so." He ought rather to say,—what a pious and humble preacher must mean—I hope and trust that what I am setting forth is sound and useful doctrine; *and so far as it is* so, it must be the gift of Him "from whom all good things do proceed;" but *how far* it is so, both you and I must judge as well as we can, by a careful reference to Holy Scripture, with a full consciousness of our own fallibility.

§ 6. Our safest and most humbly pious course is, in any practical question, to endeavour to ascertain, in the first instance, what was the practice of the Apostles; and to adhere to that, whenever we find that the rules or customs they sanctioned were not of a merely local or temporary character, but were equally suited to our own Age and Country. And not only is respect due to their *practices*, but these practices will often throw light on their *doctrine;* since whatever *belief*, on any point, seems naturally to be implied in what they were accustomed to *do*, may be presumed to have been *their* belief. And we ought surely rather to put ourselves under their teaching, where it is to be had, than to adopt and act upon the inferences drawn from any theological theory of our own. *Practice of the Apostles.*

Now with respect to the question of infant-baptism, though there is not in Scripture any express injunction or prohibition relating to it, any one who inquires with an unbiassed mind may arrive, I think, at a complete moral certainty as

to what was the practice of the Apostles and other primitive Christians.

For several years, we should remember, they were all *Jews*. And even after the Gentiles had begun to be engrafted into the Church, the Gospel was still, in each place, preached first in the Jewish Synagogue; and the greatest part of the most eminent teachers were of that nation.

Now men brought up under the LAW, would, of course, adhere to the principles of that law, wherever these were not at variance with Christianity; and would be disposed to view everything in the Gospel *according to the analogy* of Judaism, except when *taught otherwise*. And their inspired instructors did teach them otherwise, when there was need. Whenever this disposition was carried to a faulty excess,—as in the well-known instance (Acts xv.) of the attempt to place Gentile-Christians under the Levitical Law,—the error was, we may be sure, as in that instance, promptly corrected, and firmly resisted by the Apostles.

Now Baptism having always been clearly understood to be the initiatory rite

by which members were admitted into the christian Church,* it cannot, I think, be doubted, by any unprejudiced inquirer, that the early Christians must have been prepared to observe the like rules in admitting (by Baptism) members into the christian Church, to those they had been accustomed to, in reference to the Jewish. If it had been the rule to admit Adults only into the Mosaic Covenant—if infancy had been a bar to any one's reception,—then, they would never have thought of baptizing *children* into the christian Church, unless *expressly commanded* to do so. If—as is the fact—they had been accustomed to enrol in the *Jewish* Church their own infants, and proselytes of all ages, then they would, as a matter of course, adhere to the same rule, in reference to the *christian* Church, unless *expressly forbidden.* And so strong

* Agreeably to our Lord's charge to his Apostles (Matt. xxviii.), the exact rendering of which is "make disciples of all nations" (*i.e.*, enrol them as members of the Church) "by baptizing them into the name," &c.

The *marginal* rendering of μαθητεύσατε in our Bible is preferable to that in the text.

See also Acts viii. 36, and x. 47.

and universal must have been the disposition to bring to Baptism the *children* of believers, that if this had not been allowable, we should undoubtedly have found in the New Testament most distinct and frequent notices of its prohibition. As for distinct injunctions or recommendations, these could not have been at all needed in favour of any practice about which there had never been any hesitation.

And as for the many scruples and questions that have been raised relative to infant-baptism, none of these would be likely even to occur to their minds; because they had been familiar all their lives with the admission into the Mosaic Covenant of infants, incapable, at the time, of availing themselves of, or at all understanding, the benefits of that Covenant.

How the Apostles must have been understood by Jewish Converts.

§ 7. We have therefore, I conceive, a complete moral certainty that the earliest Christians did practise infant-baptism, and that it received at least the

tacit sanction and approval of the Apostles; whose prohibitions of it we should not have failed to find recorded, had it been at all objectionable.

But in this, and in several other points also, difficulties, and sometimes serious mistakes, are likely to arise from want of sufficient care to view the Gospel through the medium of the *Law;*—to recollect, that is, not only that the Mosaic Dispensation itself was the forerunner and type of the christian, which fulfilled and extended it, but also that Christianity was first preached *by*, and *to*, men who had been brought up Jews; and that accordingly we must carefully consider, and steadily keep in mind, what were the habits and modes of thought, of Jews, of that Age and Country, and in what way *they* would be likely to understand and to act upon the precepts and doctrines delivered to them. For, the interpretations which were the most obvious to *them* will be often different from what may be the most obvious to *us* of the present day. And again, it will often happen that what were to them the

greatest difficulties (as, for instance, the admission of the Gentiles to be "fellow-heirs") will be, to us, no difficulties at all. And whatever meaning presented itself to *their* minds, may be presumed to be the right one, whenever they were not taught otherwise by their inspired guides the Apostles, who were at hand to correct any mistakes they might fall into.

Thus, for instance, if we would inquire what we are to understand by "Saints" —"God's People"—and "the Elect" ["chosen"] &c. our safest course is to look to the sense in which an *Israelite* had been accustomed to hear those words employed, and to consider how *he* would be likely to understand them, by analogy, in reference to the Gospel-dispensation.*

And so also, if we would understand what was meant by the "baptizing of a Household," which we read of in the New Testament—whether it included, or not, the *infant-children* of the believing parents,—our guide should be the practice of the Israelites in reference to any

* See *Sermon on "Christian Saints."*

Gentile-family, the Heads of which had renounced idolatry, and desired to be admitted as proselytes—as Israelites by adoption,—into the number of God's Chosen People under the Old Dispensation. "Let ALL his males be circumcised, and then let him draw near and eat the Passover," was the direction of the Law under which they acted.

And if an intelligent and well-disposed Israelite had been asked, what benefit he contemplated as accruing from enrolment in the number of God's People, to an infant, incapable of either obeying or disobeying the Law, and of enjoying, or understanding, the promised blessings of the Covenant, he would probably have replied, that the child—being dedicated to the Lord by Jewish parents or guardians, solemnly bound to instruct and bring him up as a Jew—might be expected, as soon as he should be able, and as far as he should be able, to understand these things, to become, gradually, an observer of the Law, and a partaker of its benefits; and that, then, he would not obtain a new *possession* of something

which, before, was not his, but would merely enter on the full enjoyment of a benefit previously conferred on him.

The case, in short, would be viewed as analogous to some which occur every day in the ordinary business of life. In the common language, for instance, of secular business, a person is said to have *received* —as a payment, or as a gift,—such and such a sum of money; even when no *money* is actually handed to him, but only a *draft* on some banker who is ready to pay it as soon as presented. And we speak of him as having received this sum, although we know that he may possibly not present the draft for several days or weeks; or may even, through gross negligence, fail ever to present it at all. Or again, take the case of an infant inheriting an estate, or a title, or the "freedom" of some corporation. Though not capable, at the time, of profiting by, or understanding these advantages, he will subsequently become so; and will then, if he use them aright, not *acquire* any new possession, but derive the suitable advantages from those to which he was already

entitled. And even as the inheritor of a fortune may, when he grows up, make either a good or an ill use of his wealth, so, any one, whether the child of an Israelite by birth, or of a Proselyte admitted into the Jewish Church, might in after-life, either avail himself rightly of the privileges thus bestowed on him, or convert them into a curse, by his neglect or abuse of them.

And supposing this latter case—supposing the son of some devout Proselyte to have become an idolater, or in some other way a transgressor of the Law—he would, no doubt, have been admonished (by a Prophet, or other pious Jew) not, to *become* an Israelite—not, to seek *admission* into the number of God's chosen People, —but, to repent, and *return* to the Lord, to *reform* his life, and to walk worthy of the privileges to which he had been admitted.

Now all this, an intelligent and pious Jew who should have embraced the Gospel, would naturally be inclined to apply, by analogy, to the case of the Christian-dispensation.

Analogy of the Mosaic Law.

§ 8. And accordingly, one of the most eminent of these —the Apostle Paul himself— directs the attention of his converts to such an analogy: applying the very word "*baptized*" to the Israelites on their deliverance from Egypt; whom he speaks of as being *all* "chosen" to be partakers of special divine favours; while yet,—as he reminds the Corinthians (1 Cor. x.)— most* of those very men "were overthrown in the wilderness;" not, according to any eternal divine decree (at least he mentions none) excluding them from the promised blessings, but as a consequence of their obstinate rebellions. It was because "they thought scorn of that pleasant land, and gave no credence unto his word," that the Lord "sware unto them that they should not enter into his rest." And all "these things" Paul tells the Corinthians, "are written for the admonition" of Christians.

It is thus that (as was remarked above) we may plainly learn from the *practice* of the early Church what were the *doctrines*

* τοῖς πλείοσιν.

taught in it. Having ascertained what the early Christians were accustomed, under the guidance of the Apostles, to *do*, in reference to the administration of Baptism, we may thence safely infer what was their *belief* on the subject.

And here it is to be remarked, by the way, that I have been representing a pious and intelligent Israelite as speaking, all along, of the case of children brought forward for dedication to the Lord, *by parents or guardians designing to educate them accordingly*. He would surely never have imagined that any one could have a right or a power, to admit into the Mosaic Covenant a Gentile infant who was to be brought up as a heathen. And, by parity of reasoning, he would not, as a Christian, regard as of any avail, or as a valid Baptism at all, the performance of an outward ceremony on an infant that is to be brought up—as far as we know and believe—in entire ignorance of christian duties and privileges. No one would be regarded as sowing seed to any purpose, —or indeed as, in correct languge, *sowing* it at all,—who should purposely scatter

corn on the trodden way-side, with a full knowledge that it would be immediately "devoured by the fowls of the air," instead of springing up, and producing, "first the blade, then the ear, and afterwards the full corn in the ear."

I mention this, because there are instances recorded, of priests administering by stealth (through mistaken pious charity) what they regard as the rite of christian Baptism, to the infants of savages, or of Chinese or Hindu Idolaters. But in *our* Church it is plain no such procedure is recognised. Our Formularies all along most plainly contemplate the case of a child *brought* to Baptism by persons pledging themselves to its education as a Christian. In the narrative so earnestly dwelt on in the Baptismal Service, the children brought to our Lord for his blessing, must evidently have been the children of *believing* parents.* And all the declarations

* See Luke xviii. 15. The right rendering of τὰ βρέφη evidently is, in this passage, "their infants." The article (which our Translators are apt to overlook altogether) has often the sense of our possessive pronoun. So it has also in French. "I have a pain in my head" would be rendered "j'ai mal à *la* tête:" *the* head.

made in our Formularies—the hopes expressed—the Prayers—the Exhortations—in short, everything that is said—must evidently be understood as proceeding on this supposition.

And accordingly, the very reason assigned in the Catechism for its being allowable to administer Baptism to infants, is, that as there are certain indispensable *conditions* of the benefits promised to them, so, the fulfilment of these conditions is promised *by* them, through their Sureties.

As for the "remission of sins" at Baptism, so frequently alluded to in our Services, this, it is plain, cannot be understood of *actual* sins, in the case of an *infant*, which is not a moral agent at all, nor capable of either transgressing or obeying God's laws,—of resisting, or of following the suggestions of his Spirit. Nor again can it mean an entire removal and abolition of the frail and sinful nature, —the "*phronema sarkos*" inherited by every descendant of Adam; since our 9th Article expressly declares that this "remaineth even in those that are rege-

nerate." But it seems to denote that those duly baptized are considered no longer as children of the condemned and disinherited Adam—as no longer aliens from God*—disqualified for his service—and excluded from the offers of the Gospel, but are received into the number of God's adopted children, and have the promise of forgiveness of sins, and, as it were, the treasury thrown open to them of divine grace, through which, if they duly avail themselves of it—though not otherwise—they will attain final salvation.

Those who seek to go as far as they can towards doing away all connexion of spiritual benefit with Baptism, and reducing it to a mere sign of admission into a *community possessing no spiritual endowments at all*, sometimes appeal to the case of Cornelius and his friends, on whom

* This is doubtless what is meant by the expression "children of wrath," in the Catechism, and "deserving God's wrath," in the Ninth Article. The Reformers could not have meant the words "God's *wrath*" to be understood in their literal sense; since they had laid it down in the First Article that God is "without body, parts, or *passions*."

"the Holy Ghost fell" before they were baptized. But they seem to forget that this was the *miraculous gift of tongues, of prophecy*, &c., which never was, *nor was ever supposed* to be, the "inward spiritual grace" of Baptism. It was never conferred at Baptism; [see Acts viii. 16;] but was always bestowed, except in this one case, (in which there was an obvious reason for the exception,) through the laying on of hands of an Apostle [see Acts xix. 6]. And accordingly the Romans, when Paul wrote to them [Rom. i. 11], had received no miraculous gifts, though they were baptized Christians, and are reminded by the Apostle that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Language of our Reformers.

§ 9. Such seems to be the most simple and unforced interpretation of the language of our Church in various passages of her Formularies: as for instance in the Catechism, where the Catechumen speaks of "Baptism, wherein I was made a child of God . . . and an inheritor of the King-

dom of Heaven;" and again, where it is said that "being by nature born in sin . . . we are hereby made the children of Grace."

Now this placing of a person in a different condition from that in which he was originally born, may, not improperly, be denoted (as it appears to be, by our Reformers) by the term "Regeneration" or "New-birth."*

But no one can suppose that they regarded the sowing of seed, as the same thing with the full maturity of the corn for harvest, or as necessarily implying it. To be born into the natural world, is not the same thing as to be grown up : nor can it be pronounced of every infant that is born, that it *will*, necessarily, grow up into manly maturity. So, also, our Reformers never meant to teach that every one who is baptized is sure of salvation, independently of his "leading the rest of his life according to this beginning;" [*Baptismal Service;*] or again, that we

* The Ninth Article has, in the original Latin, the word "renati" *twice*; "translated, first, "regenerate," and afterwards, "baptized."

can be infallibly sure that he *will* do so; any more than we can pronounce with certainty (according to the analogy of a temporal inheritance, above alluded to) that one who has an estate bequeathed to him, will claim his inheritance in proper form, and will also make that right use of his wealth on which depends its becoming a real blessing to him.

The language used by our Reformers, on this subject, as being, in their judgment, the most in accordance with that of Scripture, is certainly not exempt from difficulties and dangers to the "unlearned and unstable, who wrest even the Scriptures to their own destruction." But to have omitted all mention of "regeneration," which is so often mentioned and alluded to in Scripture, is what no one could think of. And to have used (as some do) a different kind of language from that which our Reformers do use, would have been to incur at least an equal danger, if not a still greater. If there be a danger of the "unlearned and unstable" relying too much on the efficacy of Baptism, surely no candid and

thoughtful person can doubt that persons of a like character, if taught that the "new birth" necessarily implies infallible salvation, may be led, if they believe themselves to have experienced this new birth, into a careless confidence, and may neglect to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling;" especially if they hear a preacher say—and it *has* been said from the pulpit—that "God's people ought, indeed, to grieve much at the sinfulness of the world, but never to *feel any alarm or uneasiness at any sins of their own*, because God *leaves his own people to fall into many grievous sins*, on purpose to *humble* them."

If any one sees no danger in such teaching as this, he must be beyond the reach of argument.*

* On this subject I have subjoined, in a Note at the end of this Lecture, some extracts from the writings of the late Bishop Ryder, of Mr. Simeon, and of Archbishop Sumner.

When one party in the Church censure severely, and not unreasonably, another party, for explaining away, to suit their own views, the plain words of one portion of our Formularies, while they themselves put a no less forced construction, for their own purposes, on another portion, and incur, for so doing, an equally strong, and

The expression, in our Catechism, of "an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven" seems to be used in reference to the *tendency*, and the suitable *result*, of an admission into the Church of Christ. And such a kind of language is often employed by all Writers: and not least, by the Apostles. When, for instance, the Apostle John says that "whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World;" and that "every one who is born of God, doth not commit sin," it cannot be supposed that he meant to attribute to Christians moral *perfection*, and *impeccability;* while, on the contrary, he exhorts them to "confess their sins." Far was it from his design, to teach that one who did but feel convinced of having experienced the new-birth, might safely remit his exertions, and relax his vigilance against sin, and "count himself to have apprehended" and to be thenceforward sure of divine acceptance, and of everlasting life, without

equally just censure from their opponents, it seems but too plain that neither party really disapprove of such a procedure on account of its intrinsic unfairness, but merely when it makes against themselves.

"taking heed lest he fall." On the contrary, he was writing—as is well known—in opposition to those Gnostics of his day, who were grossly Antinomian, and who, while they professed to "have no sin" in God's sight, and to be sure of salvation through their supposed "knowing the Gospel" (Gnosis), lived a life of flagrant immorality.

In contradiction to these monstrous tenets, he declares that every one who has a well-grounded "hope in Christ, purifieth himself, even as He is pure:"—that a sinful life is *inconsistent* with the character of the "sons of God;"—that the *tendency*, in short, and suitable result of being "born of God," is opposed to the commission of sin.

And indeed, in all subjects, it is a very common mode of speaking, to attribute to any person or thing, some quality, which, though not an *invariable*, is a *suitable*, or natural, attribute, and may reasonably be looked for therein.

In this way, many words have come to vary gradually from their original signification. For instance, to "cure," in its

etymological sense, (from "curare,") signifies to take *care* of a patient, and to administer medicines. In its present use, it implies the *successful* administration.

So also it is with the word* which, in the language of the New Testament Writers, signifies not to *tend*, but to *heal*; and is so rendered in our version, though the other is well known to be the original meaning of it.

In like manner we often, figuratively, *deny* some title to an object that is wanting in those qualities which *ought* to belong to it, or which that title suggests as a natural and consistent accompaniment, and what may fairly be expected. Thus, for instance, in speaking of some act of excessive baseness or depravity, it is not uncommon to say, "one who could be guilty of this, is *not* a MAN:" meaning, of course, that such conduct is unworthy of the manly character;—inconsistent with what may be fairly expected from a *man*, as such; and more suitable to the brutish

* θεραπεύω.

nature.* But so far are we from understanding that any one who acts thus unworthily, is not, strictly and literally, a man, that on the contrary, this is the very ground of our censure. We condemn a *man* who acts the part of a brute, precisely *because* he *is* a man—a Being from whom something better might have been looked for—and *not* one of the brute-creation.

Again, any one might say of a garden that was greatly neglected, and over-run with wild plants, "this is *not* a *garden*," or "it does not deserve the name of a garden;" though it is precisely because it is, literally, a garden, that we speak thus contemptuously of it: since, in an uncultivated spot, the sight of a luxuriant wild vegetation does not offend the eye.

It is in a similar mode of speaking that Paul declares, that "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and cir-

* "I dare do all that may become a *man;*
Who dares do more, is *none.*"—*Macbeth.*
Some remarks on this kind of language, in reference to another subject, will be found in the treatise on *Rhetoric*, Part III. chapter iii. § 3.

cumcision is of the heart," &c.,* meaning, (as, no doubt, every one must have understood him,) that one who is not in his heart, and his conduct, a servant of the Lord, is wanting in what *ought* to characterize the Lord's People,—is *inconsistent* with his profession, and an *unworthy* member of the Jewish Church;—one who will derive no benefit, but the contrary, from the privileges to which he has been admitted as a Jew. For, it is because such a one *is*, literally, a Jew, that he will incur a heavier penalty than an unenlightened Heathen.

He might equally well have said—and doubtless would have been ready to say—according to the same kind of figure—that he is not a "baptized" Christian—he is not "regenerate"—who is so outwardly alone, and has nothing of the christian character within. And indeed the Apostle Peter actually does employ similar language in speaking of Baptism, (which, he says, "saveth us,") when he says that it is "not the putting away the filth of the flesh," (*i.e.* the outward application of water,) "but the answer of a good con-

* Rom. ii. 28.

science towards God;" not meaning that a person deficient in this has not been, literally, and in the strict and proper sense of the word, baptized at all, and needs to have that rite administered to him; but that he is wanting in that which is the proper and beneficial *result* of an admission into the christian Church.

And corresponding forms of expression are very common, on various subjects; and seldom give rise to any error, or confusion of thought, or obscurity, except in those cases (religious discussions are among the principal) in which men under the influence of some strong prejudice, exercise their ingenuity in seeking for anything that may serve as an argument, and in interpreting words according to the letter and against the spirit, for the sake of supporting some favourite theory.

Confirmation the Sequel to one Sacrament, and the Introduction to the other.

§ 10. Once more then I would invite attention to the importance of examining carefully, in any controversy that may arise, how far it may turn on differences in the expressions em-

ployed. Let any two persons, whose views appear at the first glance, widely at variance, be prevailed on to depart, for a time at least, from the strict technical language of a theological School, and to state, in as *many different forms as possible*, what is the practical advice they would give to each Christian, under various circumstances: and it will often come out, that one whom his neighbour had perhaps been at first disposed to condemn as abandoning some fundamental truths of Christianity, has, in fact, merely avoided the particular terms in which the other has been accustomed to express them; and the difference between the parties is not such, either in degree or in kind, as had been supposed.

In guarding, however, against verbal controversies *mistaken for real*,* I would not be understood as thinking little of the importance of careful accuracy of language. Indeed, the very circumstance that inattention to this may lead to serious mistakes as to our meaning, would alone be sufficient to show how needful

* See Logic, *Verbal Questions*.

it is to be careful as to our mode of expression.

And here it may be remarked, that the Clergy have an especial opportunity, and an especial call, for giving early, and full, and systematic instruction on all the points here touched on, in their discharge of that most important branch of their duty, the preparing of children for the solemn Ordinance of CONFIRMATION. The course of that preparation affords them a most fitting occasion for explaining to them the character of the Sacraments according to the views of our Church; which evidently designs to make Confirmation, not a distinct Sacrament, but a connecting link between the two;—a kind of supplement and completion to the one, and an introduction to the other. And this sacred rite has the advantage, when duly administered to persons properly prepared, of obviating every reasonable objection to the practice of Infant-Baptism, and thus justifying, and exhibiting as an harmonious whole, the system of Church-ordinances established by our Reformers.

All persons accordingly ought to receive the holy Communion of the Lord's Supper on the very first opportunity after being confirmed. Our Church directs that "no one shall be admitted to the Communion except one who has been confirmed, or is ready and desirous to be confirmed;" and again, that "ALL PERSONS" (that is, of course, all who are not too young or too ignorant for Confirmation) "shall receive the Communion at least three times a year." From this it is plain that though such as have not been confirmed, may, if they are prepared and willing to receive that rite, attend without any scruple, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; on the other hand, no one, who *has* been confirmed, ought to delay receiving that Sacrament. The Catechism also, designed for the instruction of children before Confirmation, proves the same thing: since it contains an explanation of the *two* Sacraments.

Some persons entertain a groundless notion, that a child, who is fit for Confirmation, may yet be too young to receive the Communion: and many, it is to be

feared, for this and for other reasons, go on from Sunday to Sunday, and from year to year, putting off this duty, in expectation of becoming more *fit* for it; when it is likely that they are becoming every day *less* fit, and are falling into a careless and irreligious state of mind.

But any one who will consider the matter carefully, will see that our Church is quite right in determining that all, who have been confirmed, should receive the Lord's Supper without delay. For all of them, it is to be hoped, understand and rightly reflect on the one Sacrament—that of Baptism; if they do not, the ceremony of Confirmation is a mere empty mockery: and if they do, they are capable of sufficiently understanding and valuing the other Sacrament also: and in that case, they ought not to delay receiving it.*

* I subjoin an extract from a little tract published by one of the Clergy, describing the mode of administering the Rite of Confirmation in this Diocese.

"The Communion Service is commenced, and pro-
"ceeded with to the end of the Nicene Creed, when,
"the Candidates having resumed their seats in their
"allotted pews, an Address is in the next place deli-

"vered to them by the Archbishop, in the course of "which (after allusion to the nature and intention of "Confirmation as subjects presumed to have been pre- "viously fully explained to them by their *Mistaken Notion of Confirmation.* "respective pastors), they are particularly "cautioned against a prevalent error on the "subject of Confirmation,—the error of supposing that, "in coming forward to be confirmed, young persons "take upon them a responsibility from which they were "previously exempt, and that the responsibility up to "that time rests with the sponsors. In refutation of "this erroneous impression, they are given to under- "stand that every one is responsible for his own acts "or omissions, and no one for those of others; sponsors, "for the discharge of the duties which they undertake, "and the children, for receiving and acting on their "christian instructions;—that as soon as, and as far as, "any person is capable of knowing right from wrong, "he becomes answerable to God for all his actions, "words, and thoughts; and that every one is liable to "punishment from God, as far as he knows his duty, "or has the means of knowing it, and yet does it not.

"A similar error is next noticed as pre- *A similar Misconception regarding the Eucharist.* "valent respecting the Lord's Supper,— "some persons regarding their receiving "of that Sacrament as obliging them to a "*more* religious life than is necessary for ordinary "Christians; as if there were *two* ways of going to "heaven, and as if those who wished to be under a less "strict rule of observing Christ's commands,—though "still expecting the same inheritance of eternal life,— "might secure that exemption by breaking this further "command of Christ, 'do this in remembrance of "me.'

"In reference, therefore, to these two mischievous "misconceptions, the Address goes on to remind the "young persons that they will not be *more bound* to "observe their baptismal engagements the day *after*

"their Confirmation than they were the day *before*, "inasmuch as those engagements were binding upon "them personally before, and it was impossible to add "to their obligation; nor yet that they will be *more* "*bound* to lead a godly life *after* partaking of the "Lord's Supper than *before*, simply because there were "not *two* kinds of holiness required of Christians: one, "a *superior* kind required of *communicants*, and the "other an *inferior* kind required of *non-communicants*; "but that it was to be hoped for them that they would "be henceforth *more likely* to fulfil those engagements, "and to lead such a life, by the help of the Holy Spirit, "bestowed in answer to the faithful prayers of the "congregation in their behalf, and their own to the "same effect, as also particularly by their meet and "fitting participation in the Holy Sacrament of Christ's "precious Body and Blood, inasmuch as these were "means to such an end:—.

"That, accordingly, if they really desired to observe "the christian profession which they were then about "to make, and to fulfil the end for which they had "been created and redeemed, by glorifying God by lives "of holiness, they would be carefully solicitous, both "now and ever, to avail themselves of all his vouch-"safed means of grace, and especially of that means "to which they were to be that day for the first time "admitted, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by "henceforth devoutly and habitually partaking of it.

The Order of Confirmation commenced.

"This Address being ended, the Confir-"mation Service begins. The Preface to "the Order having been read, the hush of "reverential attention which receives the "solemn question of the Bishop, and the murmur of "affirmation which responds to it from the youthful "assemblage, heard and recorded on high;—the alter-"nate versicles, ascribing the required 'help' to 'the "name of the Lord,' and followed by the prayer of the "Bishop for the manifold gifts of grace from the Holy

"Ghost, the Comforter;—all combine most favourably "with the preceding solemnities and admonitions, to "foster devotional feeling—to dispose even the most "wayward heart for the reception and retention of "heavenly impressions.

The second Address.

"All having been confirmed, and the "Confirmation Service brought to a close, "the young persons resume their seats in "the body of the Church, and are again addressed by the "Archbishop,—their attention having been especially "bespoken by the introductory remark that the Ad- "dress might be easily printed and distributed amongst "them, but that it would be much more profi- "table for them to think it over at home, and "afterwards to write down for themselves "the heads of it, and to show the abstract to their "respective ministers, or some other friends, to see "how far they may have remembered the substance, "&c.

Address why orally delivered.

"The Address then goes on to warn the young per- "sons of the great danger to which they were liable, "of forgetting gradually all that was then passing, and "had been passing in their minds that day,—the holy "resolutions, hopes, and prayers, which characterized "the occasion of their Confirmation, and the solemn "warnings and advice which were then addressed to "them;—and proceeds to suggest for their adoption "some likely means, under the divine blessing, of per- "petuating and bringing to good effect those—other- "wise too fugitive—pious thoughts and aspirations, "which, it is presumed, the whole ceremony of their "Confirmation had stirred up within them. And, on "this head, after an enumeration of other ordinary "means of grace conducive to this good purpose, they "are recommended to adopt and cultivate the habit of "serious self-examination at all times, but particularly "to set apart, in each year, *the Anniversary of their* "*Confirmation*, as an especially suitable and solemn

"occasion for the performance of that duty:—that as "special days, such as Christmas-day, Easter-day, &c., "were observed among Christians, to commemorate "*public* events;—and as in families the observance of "*birth-days* was a customary practice, but more parti- "cularly of those days which witnessed any young "persons' coming of age, and succeeding to their inhe- "ritance; even so that *they* should regard the anni- "versary of their Confirmation as a kind of *private* "*religious festival*,—as a *religious birth-day*, to com- "memorate their coming of age in religion:—

"That, if they had on that day come of age, and had "succeeded to a vast estate, they would rejoice, and "their friends would congratulate them, and wish them "life and health to enjoy the wealth to which they had "succeeded; even so, that they should now earnestly "reflect upon the nature of the inheritance *that* day "set before them; (1) not an uncertain good, which "might be an evil or a good to the possessor; but one "that is (2) inestimably beyond all price, and (3) "which will not come to an end after a few short "years:—

"But that, as worldly wealth was not necessarily of "itself a blessing, and as its proving such depended "upon the *use* which might be made of it, as a deposit "held in trust for the glory of its Almighty Giver; "even so, that the spiritual wealth to which they might "regard themselves as having that day succeeded, "brought, likewise, its peculiar trials, responsibilities, "and duties along with it:—if used properly, it would "prove the means of their growing daily more and "more rich toward God, and a blessed earnest of a far "more glorious inheritance in heaven; but, if neglected "and unimproved, like the talent laid up in the napkin, "it would but serve to deepen their guilt, and to ag- "gravate their condemnation hereafter.

"All this they are recommended to recall to their "minds on each anniversary of their Confirmation;

"and, as each will have brought them so much nearer "the grave, to reflect and see whether it has advanced "them in their christian course; whether they have "fallen back, or stood still, or made progress; and to "resolve anew each year to correct, to improve, to per- "severe, &c., as the case may be:—

"That the time will come when they will think of "all this, and of *nothing else*, when it will be too late "to amend the future, there being no further trial; "that they will have to give an account then of all that "has passed here below, and, among the rest, of 'the "very words now spoken;' that, therefore, they should "think of all this *now* that there is time, and while the "day of grace is still continued to them.

"The Address concludes with some hints for the con- "duct of that work of self-examination which they are "thus earnestly recommended at all times to practise, but "especially on those annual occasions,—namely, (I.) *on* "*the importance of a candid inquiry after faults;* (II.) "*on looking out for encouraging signs of improvement;* "(III.) *on advancement in christian knowledge;* (IV.) *on* "*the practical application of what they thus learn;* (V.) "*on the increased insight into their own defects, which* "*they may expect to acquire as they advance.*

"The Communion-Service is then resumed at the "Prayer for the Church Militant; and when the young "persons, brought up a second time to the Rails in the "same orderly manner as before, have received the "emblems of a dying Saviour's love, followed by those "who present themselves from the general congrega- "tion, the post-Communion Service is proceeded with, "and they are finally dismissed by the Archbishop with "the Blessing, which closes the holy ordinances of the "day with peculiar propriety, it being, as it were, an "epitome of their whole administration, which is but "one continued and solemn Benediction throughout."

NOTES TO LECTURE IV.

Note F.

These two points—(1) the *existence* of such decrees, and (2) the *teaching* of them as an essential part of the *Gospel-revelation*—are quite distinct, though often confounded together. Calvin, and many others, both before and after his time, maintained both. And it is utterly improper that any one should be called, either by themselves, or by others, "Calvinists," who dissent from any part of what Calvin himself insisted on as a necessary portion of his theory. "Many," says he, "as if wishing to remove odium from God, while they "admit *election*, yet deny *reprobation*; but in this they "speak ignorantly and childishly; since election itself "could not be maintained except as contrasted with "reprobation. God is said to set apart those whom He "adopts as children, for salvation. Those therefore "whom He passes by, He condemns; and that, *for no* "*cause whatever*, except that *He chuses* to exclude them "from the inheritance which He predestinates for his "children." And again, shortly after, he says, "Whence "comes it that so many nations, with their infant "children, should be sentenced irremediably to eternal "death, by the fall of Adam, except that such was God's "will?" . . . "The Decree is, I confess, a horrible "one," &c.—Calvin, *Inst.* L. iii. c. xxiii. § 7.

Note G.

"I would wish," remarks Bp. Ryder, "generally to "restrict the term (regeneration) to the baptismal pri-"vileges; and considering them as comprehending not

"only an external admission into the visible Church,
"not only a covenanted title to the pardon and grace
"of the Gospel, but even a degree of spiritual aid
"vouchsafed, and ready to offer itself to our acceptance
"or rejection at the dawn of reason. I would recom-
"mend a reference to these privileges in our discourses,
"as talents which the hearer should have so improved
"as to bear interest; as seed which should have sprung
"up and produced fruit.

"But at the same time I would solemnly protest
"against that most serious error (which has arisen pro-
"bably from exalting too highly the just view of bap-
"tismal regeneration) of contemplating all the mem-
"bers of a baptized congregation as *converted*,—as
"having, all, once known the truth, and entered upon
"the right path, though some may have wandered from
"it, and others may have made little progress,—as not
"therefore requiring (what all by nature, and most it
"is to be feared through defective principle and prac-
"tice, require) that 'transformation by the renewing
"of the mind;'—that 'putting off the old man, and
"putting on the new man,' which is so emphatically en-
"joined by St. Paul to his baptized Romans and Ephe-
"sians."—*Extract from Bishop Ryder's (of Lichfield) Primary Charge to his Clergy.*

"In the Baptismal Service," says the late Mr. Simeon, "*we thank God for having regenerated the baptized infant by his Holy Spirit.* Now from "hence it appears that, *in the opinion of our Re-formers, regeneration and remission of sins did ac-company baptism.* But in what sense did they hold "this sentiment? Did they maintain that there was no "need for the seed then sown in the heart of the bap-"tized persons to grow up and to bring forth fruit; or "that he could be saved in any other way than by a "progressive renovation of his soul after the divine "image? Had they asserted any such doctrine as "that, it would have been impossible for any enlight-

"ened person to concur with them. But nothing can "be conceived more repugnant to their sentiments than "such an idea as this: so far from harbouring such a "thought, they have, and that too in this very prayer, "taught us to look to God for that total change both of "heart and life which, *long since their days, has begun "to be expressed* by the term 'regeneration.' *After "thanking God for regenerating the infant by his Holy "Spirit*, we are taught to pray 'that he being dead "unto sin, and living unto righteousness, may crucify "the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of "sin;' and then, declaring the total change to be the "necessary mean of his obtaining salvation, we add, "'so that finally, with the residue of thy holy Church, "he *may* be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom.' "Is there (I would ask) any person that can require "more than this? Or does God in his Word require "more?

"There are two things to be noticed in refer- "ence to this subject, the *term* 'regeneration' and the "*thing*. The term occurs but twice in the Scriptures: "in one place it refers to baptism, and is distinguished "from the renewing of the Holy Ghost, *which, how- "ever, is represented as attendant on it;* and in the "other place it has a totally distinct meaning, uncon- "nected with the subject. Now the *term* they use as "the *Scripture* uses it, and the thing they require as "strongly as any person can require it. They do not "give us any reason to imagine that an adult person "can be saved without experiencing all that *modern* "divines [*Ultra-Protestant divines*] have included in "the term 'regeneration:' on the contrary, they do "both there and in the liturgy insist upon a radical "change of both heart and life. Here, then, the only "question is, *not* 'Whether a baptized person can be "saved by that ordinance without sanctification,' but "whether God does always accompany the sign with "the thing signified? Here is certainly room for

"difference of opinion, *but it cannot be positively de-*
"*cided in the negative,* because we cannot know, or
"even judge, respecting it, in any case whatever, ex-
"cept by the fruits that follow; and, therefore, in all
"fairness, it may be considered only as a doubtful
"point; and if he appeal, as he ought to do, to the
"holy Scriptures, they certainly do in *a very remark-*
"*able way accord with the expressions in our liturgy.*
"St. Paul says, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into
"one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles—whether
"we be bond or free—and have been all made to *drink*
"*into* one Spirit.' And this he says of all the visible
"members of Christ's body, (1 Cor. xii. 13, 27.) Again,
"speaking of the whole nation of Israel, infants, as well
"as adults, he says, 'they were all baptized unto Moses
"in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same
"spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual
"drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that fol-
"lowed them, and *that rock was Christ,*' (1 Cor. x. 1,
"4.) Yet, behold, in the very next verse he tells us
"that, 'with many of them God was displeased, and
"overthrew them in the wilderness.' In another place
"he speaks yet more strongly still: 'As many of you
"(says he) as are baptized into Christ have put on
"Christ.' Here we see what is meant by the expres-
"sion, 'baptized into Christ;' it is precisely the same
"expression as that before mentioned of the Israelites
"being 'baptized unto Moses;' the preposition, εἰς, is
"used in both places; it includes all that had been
"initiated into his religion by the rite of baptism; and
"of them, universally, does the Apostle say, '*They*
"*have put on Christ.*' Now, I ask, have not the per
"sons who scruple the use of that prayer in the Bap-
"tismal Service equal reason to scruple the use of these
"different expressions?

"Again, St. Peter says, 'Repent and be baptized
"every one of you *for the remission of sins.*' (Acts ii.
"38, 39.) And in another place, 'Baptism doth now

"save us.' (1 Pet. iii. 21.) And speaking elsewhere "of baptized persons who were unfruitful in the know- "ledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, he says, '*He hath* "*forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*' (2 "Pet. i. 9.) *Does not this very strongly countenance* "*the* IDEA WHICH OUR REFORMERS ENTERTAINED, THAT "THE REMISSION OF OUR SINS, AND THE REGENERA- "TION OF OUR SOULS, IS ATTENDANT ON THE BAPTIS- "MAL RITE? Perhaps it will be said that the inspired "writers spake of persons who had been baptized at an "adult age. But if they did so in some places, they "certainly did not in others; and where they did not, "they must be understood as comprehending all, "whether infants or adults; and therefore the language "of our liturgy, which is not a whit stronger than "theirs, may be both subscribed and used without any "just occasion of offence.

"Let me then speak the truth before God: though "I am no Arminian, *I do think the refinements of Cal-* "*vin have done great harm in the Church:* they have "driven *multitudes from the plain and popular way of* "*speaking used by the inspired writers,* and have made "them unreasonably and unscripturally squeamish in "their modes of expression; and I conceive that the "less addicted any person is to systematic accuracy, "the more he will accord with the inspired writers, "and the more he will approve the views of our Refor- "mers. I do not mean, however, to say that a slight "alteration in two or three instances would not be an "improvement, since it would take off a *burthen* from "many minds, and supersede the necessity of laboured "explanations; but I do mean to say that there is no "such objection to these expressions as to deter any "conscientious person from giving his unfeigned assent "and consent to the liturgy altogether, or from using "the particular expressions which we have been en- "deavouring to explain."—*Simeon's Works,* vol. ii. p. 259.

"In the case of infant baptism," says Archbishop Sumner, "there are evidently no similar means of "ascertaining the actual disposition. The benefit re- "ceived is strictly gratuitous, or 'of free grace.' It is "promised, however, to faith and obedience, presup- "posed in the recipient, and pledged in his name by "the sponsors: whence it follows that the blessing "attached to the sacrament must fail, if the conditions "fail in those who are capable of performing them: "and that the faith and obedience must become actual "and personal in those who arrive at mature age. It "has not altered the nature of Christianity, that its "external privileges are become national. Whoever, "therefore, professes the hope of the Gospel, must "individually embrace the doctrine of the Gospel: "must consent as sincerely as the earliest converts, to "refer whatever he does in word or deed to the glory "of God: with the primitive humility of the Apostles "must renounce all confidence in his own strength, "and must look for salvation through Christ's death, "with as much personal gratitude as if Christ had "suffered for him alone. Though in many cases it may "be impossible, as was formerly acknowledged, for "those who have been placed in covenant with God by "baptism, to state at what time and by what process "the truths of the Gospel became an active principle "in the mind, still it is undeniable that in all who "attain the age of reason they must become so, or the "covenant is made void: and it is a definite and intel- "ligible question whether they have actually taken this "hold, or no. How the tree was nourished and invi- "gorated, and enabled to sustain the inclement seasons "which opposed its early growth and strength, we may "in vain inquire; but whether it bears fruit or not, "and whether that fruit gives evidence of a sound "stock, any one may examine either as to himself or "others. Is the heart possessed of a sincere convic- "tion of its own sinfulness, and need of a Saviour:

"does it manifest its dependence on the Holy Spirit "by an habitual intercourse with God through prayer: "does it feel a practical sense of the great business of "this life as a probation, and preparation for eternity? "These are infallible characters of faith: and though "they will be found in different degrees in different "individuals, no one should be satisfied with himself, "and no one should suffer his congregation to be satis- "fied, till he can trace these characters in the heart.

"But if such a frame of mind is indispensable to a "Christian's reasonable hope, it is evident that a preacher "can in no wise take it for granted that it exists in his "hearers as the necessary and certain consequence of "baptism; but must require of all who have the privi- "lege of baptism, that they strive to attain it; that, "being *regenerate* in condition, they be also *renewed* in "nature: and constantly examine themselves whether "they have this proof within them, that they are born "of the *Spirit* as well as of *water*, and can make the "'answer of a good conscience towards God.'"—*Sumner's Apostolical Preaching*, ch. vii.

LECTURE V.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Deficient Attendance at the Lord's Table.

§ 1. THERE can hardly be any truly devout Christian, and who is, accordingly, an habitual attendant at the Lord's Supper, who has not observed, with great sorrow, that a large proportion —frequently a great majority—of a congregation, withdraw from the celebration of that solemn ordinance; and that, of these, though some are occasional communicants (on one or two of the greatest Festivals of our Church), many are altogether strangers to the duty; and regard it, if they regard it at all as a duty for themselves, as something to be reserved for the death-bed, and to stand in the place of the (so-called) sacrament of Extreme Unction of the Church of Rome. Habitually to communicate is what they have no notion of as a duty, to Christians as such, but only to persons

who undertake to lead a life of a certain pre-eminent holiness, and pretend to a kind of Saintship beyond, and quite distinct from what is suitable for Christians generally.

Accordingly, an intelligent stranger coming among us from some distant heathen land, and judging from his own observations and inquiries, as to the character of our religion (I mean, even that of our Church; putting out of account all other Denominations), would be likely to conclude that Christianity is not *one* religion, but two; designed for two different classes of persons, communicants and non-communicants, both, servants, indeed, of the same Master, but having, by his authority, different kinds of religious observances allotted to them respectively.

When ministers seek to form some calculation as to the effect of their exhortations, the Communion-table often furnishes something of a test, though only on the negative side. For though we cannot venture to assume that all who attend it are induced to do so by our

persuasions, or that all of them are in a proper frame of mind, on the other hand, every one who withdraws is a manifest instance of our failure.

I am not speaking of persons altogether irreligious, or who are neglectful of any acknowledged christian duties. Some such, indeed, we must always expect to meet with. But I am speaking of those whose neglect of the particular duty in question arises from some kind of misapprehension as to its character.

Faith tried by implicit Obedience required.

§ 2. If any one is disposed to say, how can there be any spiritual efficacy—any benefit to the soul—in the bread and wine administered in the Eucharist, or in the Water used in baptism, he should be reminded that though these material substances have no such virtue in themselves, there is much spiritual efficacy in an humble trust in God's promises, and ready obedience to his commands. When we do perceive any effect naturally and actually following from the use of the means employed, there is then no exercise of faith. If, for instance,

you take Opium to allay pain, or to procure sleep, or if you apply a healing ointment to a wound, there is in this no trial of faith. And if the Water of Jordan in which Naaman was told by the Prophet to wash, had had a natural virtue for curing Leprosy, or if the Water of the Pool of Siloam had been naturally efficacious for curing blindness, there would have been no trial of faith to Naaman, or to the blind man to whom our Lord gave sight. But if Naaman had persisted in his refusal to wash in the Jordan, and the blind man had not washed in the pool, as he was directed, they would not have been cured. To believe the divine assurances then, and then only, when they concur with our own experience and the evidence of our senses, and to obey the divine commands only when we understand the reason of them, is to make God's word go for nothing. But the faith which is required of us is to believe in, and to comply with, what we have good reason to believe comes from God, when we *do not* understand why He has declared and enjoined what He has.

Superstitious Notions respecting the Eucharist.

§ 3. Among the causes which have led to the neglect of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper by many, and probably, in one christian Sect, to the absolute rejection of it, must be reckoned, I cannot doubt, the superstitions that have prevailed on the subject. For, every kind of superstition, besides the intrinsic evil of it, has a tendency to cast discredit on any doctrine or institution that has been abused by an admixture of human devices. The "wall daubed with untempered mortar," which has been built up by presumptuous Man, has a tendency to bring down in its fall the original and sound parts of the building. And thus the superstitious adoration of the elements of bread and wine—not to mention that it has exposed to contemptuous rejection the religion itself of which it was represented as a part—led, I apprehend, by a natural reaction, to the entire exclusion of the Sacrament itself, which had been thus abused, from the list of christian Ordinances. The paradoxical and revolting character of the doctrine of

Transubstantiation, and the superstitions resulting from it, was doubtless one principal cause of that rejection of the Eucharist just alluded to. Not that the members themselves of the Society in question, acknowledge this, or are likely to be themselves aware of it. But no one who had observed how apt one extreme is to lead to an opposite extreme, can deem such a conjecture unreasonable.*

Of course the same divine authority which instituted the Sacraments, may modify or annul them. And accordingly if any one declares that they are no longer to be literally celebrated, profess-

* It will probably astonish some of my readers to hear that our Lord's words at the Last Supper have actually been explained away by some members of that Society, to mean merely that He was pointing out the typical character of the sacrifice of the Passover!

To say nothing of the declaration (1 Cor. xi. 23) of the Apostle Paul, who had received a direct revelation and instructions on the subject from the Lord Jesus,—it is plain that if the interpretation alluded to had been the true one, the words "take eat" &c., would have been accompanied by the giving his Disciples not the *bread*, but the *flesh of the lamb*, which was properly the Passover.

ing to be "moved by the Spirit" to say so (which is precisely equivalent to the expression of the ancient Prophets, "THUS SAITH THE LORD"), he is to be obeyed, provided he gives the requisite *proof* of his divine commission by the display of those sensible miracles which were "the signs of an Apostle." We are at liberty, indeed, to support by *arguments* our belief (however different it may be from that of the generality) as to the meaning of some passage of Scripture: but he who claims assent on the ground of having received a *divine communication*, is bound to give miraculous proofs of this. And in the absence of any such proofs, such a pretender and his followers, must be (as was remarked above) accounted guilty of a most daring presumption.

Some of these persons have alleged that there is no need of miracles to confirm their doctrines: since these doctrines are *what were taught by the Apostles*, who did establish their claim by miraculous proofs. But this holds good only with respect to doctrines admitted by *all* Christians.

When any interpretation is taught wherein Christians are not agreed, and is declared to be *established by a direct divine revelation*, miraculous proof is needed of the truth of that interpretation. Thus, no fresh miraculous sign was required to convince the Jews of the divine authority of their prophetical writings; but when these were interpreted to denote the admission of "the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs," which the Jews did *not* acknowledge, then a miraculous proof was needed, *and was accordingly given* (Acts xi.), of this interpretation. But to assume without any proofs from reason, that a certain doctrine, contrary to what is generally received, is that of the Apostles, and thence to infer that the claims to inspiration of those who teach it are to be admitted without requiring any miraculous proofs of such inspiration, is a most palpable begging of the question.

Besides the various doctrines, however, maintained by those of other Communions, there have arisen, of late years (among ourselves), persons teaching

strange mystical notions respecting the Eucharist, such as can hardly be distinguished from the theory of Transubstantiation, and which have probably contributed to lead several of themselves and of their admirers to take the consistent step of openly joining the Church of Rome. Theories have been maintained by some professed members of our Church, that are in manifest contradiction to the express words of our Article; an Article which they explain away in a "non-natural sense," in such a manner, that anything might thus be made out of anything.

It has been maintained that the declaration that no change of the substance of bread and wine takes place, is to be interpreted to mean that a change of the Substance does take place, the Accidents only remaining unchanged; which is notoriously the very doctrine our Reformers were opposing.

It would be well if any such writer and his admirers would consider what might be the result of taking similar liberties with *his own* expressions; which

might, without any greater violence, be made to signify that he had no belief at all in Christianity as a divine revelation.

We have been told that "The wicked and such as be void of a lively faith, when they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the sacramental bread," are really partakers (though to their own condemnation) of the body of Christ: that body which our Church declares "is in Heaven, and not here." And a strong presumption is thus created in favour of a Church which, consistently with this doctrine, teaches the *sacrifice* of the Mass, and calls the Communion-table an *Altar* (an expression which, unfortunately, many Protestants have inadvertently adopted), and inculcates the *adoration* of the *Host*—the victim supposed to be offered up on that Altar. And those who have accordingly gone over to that Church—mistaken as we believe them to be—show at least a higher moral principle than those who practise or who approve the system of covertly holding and teaching doctrines utterly opposed to those of the Church they profess to adhere to.

Neglect by Protestants of a known Duty.

§ 4. Some Protestants, however, we meet with who congratulate themselves on their exemption from Romish error, in this and in other points, but who need to be reminded that they are themselves guilty of a worse fault than what they censure in their brethren; from many of whom they might take an example to their own profit. For we find but too many Protestants (as was observed just above) withdrawing from the Lord's Table, in disregard of his plain injunction; while Roman Catholics do perform what they conceive to be a duty, though under what we hold to be erroneous notions concerning it.

And yet, there is much more reason for *them* to shrink from it under that kind of mysterious dread which so often keeps back Protestants. For, what *we* have to trust to, is the divine commands and promises, together with that faith and devotion of our own, of which we can judge from our own consciousness. But the Romanist has to rely, in addition, on the inward INTENTION of the Priest. If *he* be

a secret infidel, not intending, nor believing it possible, to convert the bread into the Lord's body, and inwardly regarding the whole Service with disdainful mockery—(and this is what, we know, hundreds of Priests in France declared of themselves, at the time of the first Revolution)—the whole Sacrament is nullified.

It is true however that this doctrine of "intention" is not brought prominently forward and pressed on the attention of the Roman Catholic laity. On the contrary, many of these will be found, on inquiry, even ignorant that their Church has any such doctrine, and ready to deny it; though it is a doctrine which the Council of Trent puts forth with an Anathema.

It should be added that even if the officiating minister be himself sincere, the same nullity is incurred if there be an absence of the requisite "*intention*" in the priest who baptised him, or in the bishop who ordained him, or in those who baptised and ordained and consecrated that bishop, &c.—in short, if there be a flaw in

any one of the innumerable links of that enormous chain on which the validity of a Sacrament is made to depend: so that no Romanist can have a reasonable certainty that he is not adoring a morsel of common bread. Yet many of them perform, nevertheless, what they sincerely believe to be their duty, while many a Protestant omits what he acknowledges to be his.

Erroneous Views respecting the Eucharist to be met by appeal to Scripture.

§ 5. As for those semi-Romish theories (as they may be called) just adverted to, I shall not attempt any particular examination of them, as they are so mystically obscure that it may be well doubted whether even the framers of them attach, themselves, any distinct meaning to their own language; and it cannot be doubted that, to plain ordinary Christians, they must be altogether unintelligible. But I would remark, in reference to the doctrine of Transubstantiation itself, and to any others closely approaching it, that it is not advisable to resort (as some eminent Divines have

done) to metaphysical arguments respecting the properties of Matter, or to appeals to the bodily senses, or to allegations of the abstract impossibility of such a miracle as is in this case pretended. At least, any considerations of this kind should hold a secondary and very subordinate place; and the primary and principal appeal should be made to the plain declarations of Scripture in their most natural sense.

Such was the procedure of our Reformers, who, in the twenty-eighth Article, instead of entering on any subtle disquisitions, declare that the doctrine of Transubstantiation "cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture."

If we are fully convinced that the Scriptures contain a divine revelation, we are required to receive whatever they distinctly assure us of, however little we may be able to understand its possibility. But then, if it be something extremely paradoxical, we may fairly expect to have —if it *is* to be an Article of Faith—a more distinct and unmistakeable declaration of it in Scripture than if it had been

something antecedently probable, and in harmony with the rest of what is revealed.

Now, to the present case this principle will apply. It is, indeed, not correct to say (though it is very commonly said) that the alleged miracle of Transubstantiation contradicts the senses. For, all that is testified by the senses is, the *attributes* [the accidents] of any material object—the appearance, for instance, and smell, and taste, of bread; and all these attributes the advocates of Transubstantiation admit to remain unchanged. Our belief that that which has these attributes *is* the substance of bread, is an *inference* which we draw *from* the testimony of our senses; but however correct the inference may be, it is not the very thing which the senses themselves testify, but a conclusion deduced from the perception of those qualities which the senses do present to us.

To state the matter in the briefest form: the procedure of Protestants, and, in all other cases, of Roman Catholics also, is this: Whatever has all the accidents of bread, is the substance,

bread; this that is before us has those accidents; therefore it is the substance, bread. Now, of the two premises from which this inference is drawn, it is the minor only that the senses attest; and it is the *other* premiss that the Romanist denies. But he draws a like inference with ours from the testimony of his senses in all other cases; though he maintains, in this one case, not that our senses deceive us, but that there is a change of the substance of bread into that of a human body, while all the accidents (as they are called) of which—and of which alone—the senses take cognizance, remain unchanged. And if asked how this can be, and how a body can be at once, and entire, in thousands of places at once, he replies by a reference to the divine omnipotence.

Alleged Miracle of Transubstantiation, a contrast to those recorded in Scripture.

§ 6. But it is admitted that all this is extremely paradoxical, and that the alleged miracle is a complete contrast to the acknowledged miracles of Jesus and his Apostles,

which were appeals to the senses; *signs* (as they were usually called) of a divine mission; *proofs* as a foundation for faith; not matters of faith to be received in consequence of our being already believers in the Religion taught. The miracles that are recorded in Scripture cannot even be reckoned *improbable;* for, great as is, no doubt, the abstract improbability of any miracle, considered simply in itself, it is plain that (as is well observed by Origen) the propagation of Christianity by the force of miraculous claims, supposing them unfounded —the overthrow of the religions of the whole civilized world by a handful of Jewish peasants and fishermen, destitute of all superhuman powers—would be far more improbable than all the miracles narrated in Scripture. Even if we had, therefore, less full and distinct statements in Scripture of the miracles of Jesus and his Apostles than we have, there would have been a strong presumption that these men *could* not have done what they did, but by the display of miraculous signs.

But as for the alleged miracle of Transubstantiation, it is but reasonable that we should at least require a very strong and clear declaration of it in the inspired Writings. And here it may be worth while to remark by the way, that it is not only paradoxical, but at variance even with the very description given of it by those who maintain it. For if you ask any one of them to state what was, for instance, the first miraculous sign displayed by Moses, he will say it was the change of the Rod into a Serpent; that which had the form, colour, motion, and, in short, all the "accidents" of a serpent, being in reality Moses's rod; and he will say, not that the serpent was *changed into a rod*, but, on the contrary, that the rod was changed into a serpent. In like manner, therefore, if that which has the appearance and all the "accidents" of bread, be, in reality, a human body, he should say, not that bread is converted into the body, but that the *body has become bread.* And if he say, that that which was originally bread is changed into the Lord's body, he must yet say,

also, that that body is, immediately after, re-converted into bread.

Right Principle of Interpretation of Scripture.

§ 7. "All this surely requires, as I have said, very clear and strong scriptural authority to establish it. But when we ask for this, we are referred to such a passage as—"This is my body;" which is parallel to many others that every one understands figuratively; as when our Lord is called a Lamb, a Vine, a Shepherd, and a Door; and when He says, in explaining his Parables, "The seed *is* the Word of God;" "The Reapers *are* the Angels;" and the like. Thoroughly familiar as the Disciples must have been with such figurative expressions, it cannot be doubted that they must have so understood Him when He presented to them "bread, saying, this is my body."

If indeed He had not *in person* instituted the Rite, but his Apostles, after his departure, had, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, introduced it, using the words, "This is the Lord's body,"

there might have been perhaps some little danger—though but very little, even so—that some disciples might have supposed a miraculous though invisible change of substance to be meant. But, as if on purpose to guard against this, He Himself began the celebration of the rite; knowing, as He must have known, that the Apostles could not have thought that He was holding his own literal body in his own hands, and giving it to them, but would feel sure that He was speaking of a representation—a symbol—of his body. And to most of them—probably to all—would occur what they had heard from Himself just before, "The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that giveth life;" implying—what is of itself evidently reasonable—that the real literal flesh of the human body of the Son of Man, even if it could literally be received by our bodily organs, could not, of itself, and merely as flesh, have any spiritual efficacy as regards the soul.

And accordingly, the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper must be regarded (as I have elsewhere remarked) as not

only a Sign, but a sign of a Sign; being a Sign of his Body and Blood, which are a Sign of "the *Spirit* which quickeneth."

It seems inconceivable, then, that any one of common sense can really doubt that the Apostles understood their Master to be speaking at the last Supper, of the bread and wine as *symbols* of his body broken, and his blood shed, for them. And we may surely presume that, if this their belief had been erroneous, they would have received afterwards, on so important a point, a correction of their mistake, and whatever instruction was needed.

Now, we know from their own writings that they not only received no such correction, but continued in their original belief; since we find Paul, for instance, speaking to the Corinthians of "the *bread* that we break;" besides frequent incidental allusions, in the Book of Acts, to the "breaking of bread" as a well-known and established christian Ordinance.

There can be no doubt then, surely, in

any rational mind, that the Apostles did understand literally and not figuratively, our Lord's injunction, "Do this in remembrance of Me," as what was to be obeyed (as they did obey it) by a real literal partaking of the bread and wine; and that they did understand figuratively and not literally, his words, "This is my body."

Test of literal or figurative Interpretation.

§ 8. Now, the safest test to apply in any case of possible doubt as to the right sense of anything said by our Lord or his Apostles, is, to look to the sense (when we can ascertain it) in which their hearers understood them. And we may fairly presume that, if any mistake were made by those hearers as to the meaning of what was said on some essential point, that mistake would be rectified, and the right explanation given, either immediately or afterwards.

Thus, when the disciples understood Jesus to be speaking literally of the "leaven" of bread, He at once explained to them his real meaning. When He

spoke of his resurrection, and they "understood not," but supposed Him to be speaking figuratively, and "reasoned among themselves" what this could mean, his actual resurrection afforded them an explanation. And their belief that the benefits of the Gospel were to be confined to Jews by nature, and those Gentiles who should conform to the Mosaic Law, was a mistake corrected by an express revelation to Peter.

Now, in the present case, no correction was made of the sense in which the Disciples must certainly have understood our Lord's words. And every attentive student of Scripture will remember how earnestly, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the *oneness* of Christ's sacrifice is contrasted with the continually-repeated sacrifices of the Levitical Law; plainly showing that the Eucharist was understood to be, not a fresh sacrifice, but a feast of the one sufficient sacrifice made "once for all," and that the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood, is commemorated, but not repeated.

"This man after He had offered one

sacrifice for ever (εις το διηνεκες) then sat down on the right hand of God; . . . for by one sacrifice He hath perfected for ever (εις το διηνεκες) them that are partakers of sanctification."* And as for our Lord's expression, "my flesh is meat *indeed*" (αληθως), (which is followed in our Church-Catechism, which says that his body and blood "are *verily* and indeed received by the faithful,") the Apostles must have understood Him as when He said "I am the *true* vine"—αληθινος—which denoted not his being a vine in the *literal* sense, but in the highest and most *important* sense; even as Paul says that "that is *not* circumcision which is outward in the flesh," (which, *literally*, it clearly is,) but that "circumcision is of the heart;" *i.e.*, in the noblest and best sense.

Errors concerning the Eucharist,

§ 9. Among the errors, therefore—and doubtless there are many and great ones—which

* Not ἡγιασμενους, "them that are sanctified," in the *past* tense, but ἁγιαζομενους, in the present.

have arisen from an erroneous interpretation of Scripture, this is, I think, not to be reckoned. It must have arisen from human teaching, *by* pastors, and *to* a people, little acquainted with Scripture, and paying little regard to it. And accordingly the doctrine does not appear to have existed for the first thousand years and more. But when introduced, and prevailing, Scripture was afterwards wrested into a sense that might seem to support it.

not sprung from erroneous Interpretation of Scripture.

And this will always be readily acquiesced in, if done by a Church, which is believed to be the divinely-appointed, infallible guide in all religious matters. It is but lost labour to prove to a man's own judgment that a certain interpretation of Scripture is forced and unnatural, as long as he is fully convinced that he ought implicitly to submit his own judgment to that of his Church. He will acknowledge that there is a mysterious *difficulty*, which it is his duty to disregard; but no valid *objection*.

There are to be found—and probably always will be—persons of such a disposition as to be glad to allow others to think for them, and to relieve them of the responsibility of forming judgments for themselves. Among Protestants, one may sometimes find the leaders of Parties assuming (while they disclaim, in words, all claim to infallibility) the right of deciding for their followers; who cut short all discussion by at once denouncing all who do not agree with that Party, as "not knowing the Gospel," and who take for granted that whatever views on any point are adopted by their Party, are to be received as the undoubted decisions of the Holy Spirit; putting, in reality, though not in words, a (supposed) infallible Party, for an infallible Church.

But it is a remarkable fact, that of the persons who have even gone over to such a Church, a large proportion are of a character the very opposite to that from which most would have anticipated such a result. They are persons not distinguished by extreme self-distrust, or a tendency to

excessive and unreasonable deference and submissiveness, and a readiness on slight grounds to acquiesce in what is said; but in all respects the very opposite of all this: arrogant, self-confident, wilful, indocile, disdainful of any one who opposes their views, highly sceptical, and inclined to demand stronger proof of anything they are called on to believe than the case admits of, or than a reasonable man would require. Yet such persons are found yielding to one of the worst-supported claims that ever was set up, and assenting to a long list of most paradoxical propositions, every one of which has a vast mass of evidence against it, and hardly anything that can be called an argument in its favour.

Reaction in favour of blind Acquiescence in groundless Claims.

§ 10. The case seems to be, that a *re-action* takes place in a mind of this description; and the individual rushes with a vehemence that is quite characteristic, from one extreme to the opposite. He is weary of inquiring, discussing, investigating, answering objections, and

forming a judgment on a multitude of separate points; and so, resolves to cut short at once all this disquieting fatigue, by accepting implicitly the decisions on all points, of an Authority which demands submission, not on the ground of a conviction of the understanding, but as an act of the *Will;* commanding us to stifle doubts, and shun inquiry, and set evidence at defiance.

Such is almost the very language of one of the converts in question:—"Don't stand at the door arguing, but enter the great home of the soul—enter, and adore. . . . . Faith ever begins with a *venture*, and is rewarded with sight. . . . Such a person is under no duty to wait for clearer light. He will not have—he cannot expect—clearer light *before conversion.* Certainty, in its highest sense, is the reward of those who *by an act of the Will*, embrace the Truth, when Nature like a coward shrinks. You must make a venture. Faith is a *Venture*, *before* a man is a Catholic, and a grace after it."*

Loss and Gain.

Such a man is like one who, being the proprietor of some great manufacturing, or commercial, or agricultural concern, becomes weary of looking after a multitude of details in the various departments of the business, and watching the various persons employed in it; and thereupon resolves to throw the whole superintendence into the hands of an agent, provided with an ample Power-of-Attorney, and entrusted with unlimited control throughout. This may be a very wise course, *supposing* the agent fixed on to be one whom there are good grounds for thus trusting, as thoroughly well qualified both in point of skill and of integrity. But nothing can be a more monstrous absurdity, supposing him fixed on at random, on no grounds but his own boastful and unsupported pretensions, and merely because the proprietor resolved that he *would* fully trust *some* one, and only *one*. He has indeed thus cleared himself of a multitude of responsibilities, but at the risk of a universal and total ruin. And the convert who proceeds in an analogous manner has exchanged a number of questions on this,

that, and the other point, for *one*, which, however, comprehends in it all the rest together, and presents a great difficulty, besides, of itself. For he who has adopted a multitude of errors in the lump, on the authority of a guide whom he has no reason to trust, is responsible for all and each of those errors, and for that of chusing, by a mere act of Will, such a guide, in addition.

A man who adopts this course is likely to obtain ultimately little or nothing of that tranquillity of mind which he had hoped for, and for which he had paid so dear. In proportion as he is intelligent and thoughtful, he will be haunted with the suspicion, "Is there not a lie in my right hand? Was I justified in shutting the eyes God gave me, and giving myself up to be led by a blind guide? Is not the well-compacted fabric of my faith built on a foundation of sand?" And the more he resolves to turn away his thoughts from evidence, and to banish doubts, the more he will feel that there *are* doubts unresolved, and that evidence is against him. A firm determination of the *Will* to believe, he will find to be far different from

a real firm belief. And he will probably end—where some, it is likely, have begun—in securing that alone which alone does lie within the reach of a Will, a vehement *protestation* of belief, and inculcation of it on others, with a full conviction indeed of the usefulness of his religion, as a means of influencing the vulgar, and satisfying their craving for some devotional exercise, but with little or no conviction of its truth. If such a person avows that he has maintained what he does not inwardly think, because it was "*necessary for his position*," he may well expect to be believed in that avowal, if in nothing else. And we may feel some suspicion that some of his disciples, who do *not* make that avowal, may be inwardly of the same mind.

Disparagement of Evidence.

§ 11. Such a state of mind is likely to be fostered—perhaps generated—by some writers of no small popularity in the present day. One of them, deriding and censuring all appeals to evidences of the truth of Christianity, urges men to embrace it merely from "feeling the want

of it." He himself at one time embraced Socinianism, and at another German Transcendentalism, from such feelings of *want*. And the "want" of a deliverer from the Roman yoke led the Jews of old to reject the true Christ, and to follow false pretenders.

Again, a reviewer of the life of Gibbon attributes the historian's infidelity to his study of the evidences of Christianity. And he would have people taught that the truth of the Gospel was never denied by any one!

Another reviewer (of the life of Baxter, in the *Edinburgh*,) tells us—with marvellous ignorance, or trust in the reader's ignorance—that "the Apostles denounced unbelief as sin"—not, as is the fact, because they offered "many infallible proofs," but without any proof at all. And he assures us that inquiry into the Evidences of Christianity is likely to lead to disbelief of it.

That an avowed infidel should say this, is nothing strange; but it is truly wonderful that writers apparently zealous in the cause of Christianity should not

perceive that they are defeating their own object, and that a declaration from a *professed believer* that examination of evidence is likely to end in rejection of Christianity, does more to produce infidelity than the most ingenious objections of all the professed unbelievers that exist.

Many, however, of these persons have not sufficiently considered, and are not fully aware, that *belief* (as well as the passions and feelings) is not directly, but only indirectly, under the control of the Will. It may seem strange to speak of a person's not knowing what it is that he really believes and feels. But it is a point on which men are often mistaken. They often say—without any design to deceive—that they are very glad of this and very sorry for that, when they really feel no joy or sorrow, but think they *ought* so to feel, and resolve that they *will*, and then fancy that they *do*. But in reality, to resolve, or to exhort another, to feel admiration, or contempt, or pity, or love, &c., is as idle as to attempt to add a cubit to one's stature. To make any one feel pity, for instance, we must proceed

indirectly, by putting forward and dwelling on the circumstances which tend to excite pity. And so with the rest of the feelings. And it is the same with belief. Men may indeed be brought to believe something on very insufficient grounds: as, for instance, by being vehemently assured of it by some one for whom they have an undeserved deference. But *some* reason—good or bad—every one must have for his belief, over and above a mere *will* to believe. To convince yourself, or another, of anything, you should, in fairness, proceed, not by resolutions and exhortations, but by putting forward good *reasons* which may produce conviction. And such was the procedure of the Sacred writers. When they called on men to believe, they put before them sufficient evidence to warrant belief, and urged them to listen to that evidence. "The works that I do," said Jesus, "in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."

Ambiguity of the Word "Mystery."

§ 12. Such expressions as "sacred mystery," "awfully mysterious," and the like, are

often very successfully employed to stifle inquiry where inquiry might be dangerous, and to deter people from examining carefully what it is that they are called on to assent to, and whether the Scriptures do really teach it, or rather contradict it. And the word "Mystery," when erroneously or indistinctly understood, has contributed, no doubt, both to cherish superstition in some, and to create groundless terror in others. It was employed by our Reformers—agreeably to a use of the word which is frequent in the New Testament—to denote a *symbol*, emblem, or representation, of one thing by another. And they used it interchangeably with the words "sign" and "sacrament," as may be seen—for instance, in the Twenty-ninth Article. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the Apostle Paul speaks of marriage as an emblem,* representing the union of Christ with his Church. And in like manner, in one of the post-communion prayers we speak of, those "who have duly received these holy mysteries"—

* Μυστηριον; in the Vulgate, "Sacramentum."

viz., the bread and wine. So also in the baptismal Service, we speak of water "sanctified to the *mystical* [*i.e.*, figurative or symbolical] washing away of sin."

But the ordinary colloquial use of the word "mystery" suggests the idea of something obscure and unintelligible; and thus the way is prepared for an indefinite amount of superstition, and among others, for superstitious dread and aversion.

On the one hand, in any matter which a man conceives to be quite unintelligible —or unintelligible to *him*—many a one will be disposed to believe and do whatever is solemnly and vehemently urged upon him by his spiritual guides, without presuming to inquire whether there is any ground for such faith and practice. And, on the other hand, anything unintelligibly mysterious, and at the same time connected with something of danger, many a one will be inclined to shrink from with a kind of undefined dread, and not only to avert his thoughts from the subject, but practically to withdraw from

having anything to do with it; even as a traveller in some unknown region would dread to pass through a forest which he suspected to abound with beasts of prey and venomous serpents.

But by the word "mystery," as applied to the sacraments, our Reformers (as I have said) understood a symbolical representation. Concerning the efficacy, indeed, of our Lord's death for Man's redemption, they do not—as is, unhappily, the practice of some—attempt to give explanations beyond what the Scripture-writers have revealed to us. But far as that mystery surpasses—as the most modest and wisest men perceive—the reach of human understanding, the early Disciples, when once assured, on sufficient authority that the death of Jesus *was* a sacrifice, could have found nothing difficult or strange in the idea of a feast on a sacrifice; since, both in the Jewish and in the heathen sacrifices, they had been accustomed to see the worshippers partake of the victim. And to this custom, as a well-known one, Paul alludes, in writing to the Corinthians.

Sacrificial Character of the Death of Christ, indicated by the Eucharist.

§ 13. And it is worth observing, that, besides the many distinct and express declarations of the Sacred writers, of the sacrificial character of Christ's death, the very institution of the Eucharist was itself sufficient to impress this on men's minds; considering who and what the persons were to whom these declarations were made. If He had been merely a martyr—the greatest of all martyrs—to the cause of divine truth, it would indeed have been natural that his death should have been in some way solemnly commemorated by the Church; and perhaps by some symbolical commemoration of the *death* itself; but not, by the *eating and drinking* of the symbols of his body and blood. As is well remarked by Bishop Hinds, in one of his works, not only is the bread *broken*, and the wine *poured out* (which might have sufficiently represented the wounding of his body, and the shedding of his blood), but both are *partaken* of by those who celebrate the rite. And this would be an unmeaning and utterly absurd kind

of ceremonial in celebrating a mere martyrdom, such as that of Stephen, for instance, or of any other martyr, however eminent. Even if we had not, therefore, such numerous allusions as we find in Scripture, to "Christ our Passover as sacrificed for us," and entering "into the most holy place with his own blood," as a sacrificing priest as well as a victim,—even if we had much fewer of such statements and allusions than there are—still, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, early and generally established as we know it was, would be a decisive proof that the early Christians must have understood, from the very character of that ordinance itself, that our Lord's death was not a mere martyrdom, but a true sacrifice, similar to—though far surpassing—the expiatory sacrifices which they had been familiar with under the Law, and which we find so often referred to as types of the offering of Christ.

The passages in which such reference is made, and in which the sacrificial character of that death is strongly set forth, are so numerous, and so well known, that

it would be superfluous to cite or even to refer to them. We are not called on to receive this doctrine, remote as it is from all the anticipations of human reason, and beyond our powers of explanation, on the strength of two or three slight and oblique hints, capable of equally well bearing either that or some other signification; but the statements of the doctrine, and allusions to it, in Scripture, are—as might fairly have been expected—numerous, and distinct, and full.

Attempts to explain away the Doctrine of the Atonement.

§ 14. But attempts have been made from time to time, and are still being made, to explain all these passages as figures of speech. And this is one of my reasons for now adverting to the subject. What then, it may be asked, is the test by which we are to decide *what* expressions are to be understood literally, and what, figuratively?

The adherents of a supposed infallible Church represent an implicit deference to the decisions of such a Church as the only safeguard against all conceivable wanton-

ness of interpretation; against an indefinite amount of error, from understanding figuratively what is meant to be taken literally, and literally what is not literally meant, according to each man's private judgment, as his own fancy may dictate. And certainly if we could have proof of the existence of any such infallible authority on earth, and also a clear indication *where* it is lodged, to this guide we should be bound to resort as a safeguard against erroneous interpretations. But in the absence of any such proof, an implicit deference to the interpretations of some earthly guide would be only substituting one man's caprice for another's.

We have, however, in most cases, a very safe guide, by looking to the sense in which the *hearers* of our Lord and his Apostles, understood them. For, as has been already remarked, we may fairly presume that this must have been, in any matter of vital importance, the true sense of what was said, unless a mistake was pointed out and corrected. Thus, as was observed just now, if the Apostles had been mistaken in supposing—as they un-

doubtedly did—that what Jesus was holding in his hands and distributing to them, was not his own literal body, but a symbolical representation of it, their mistake would have been corrected. Again, our Lord's expression "Son of God," as applied to Himself, is one which might indeed conceivably have borne the meaning of his being merely a highly-favoured Prophet. But we know that his judges did understand Him as claiming a divine character; and if this had been a mistake of theirs, we may be sure He would have corrected it; else He would have been bearing false witness concerning Himself.

So also, if all the early Christians had been mistaken in their interpretation of anything that was said concerning our Lord's death, this their error would surely have been removed, and a different explanation given. Now, what they did understand, there can be no rational doubt. The idea of redemption by a sacrifice, however inexplicable, was one with which they were perfectly familiar; and they could never have thought, un-

less expressly assured of it, that the real literal sacrifices of the Levitical Law were types, not of any real sacrifice, but of a figure of speech;—that "the shadow of good things to come," which that Law contained, was much more substantial than that which it represented. Nor could they (to revert to a former remark), familiar as they were with the idea of a feast upon a sacrifice, have thought that a mere martyrdom was to be celebrated by eating and drinking the symbols of the martyr's body and blood. The very same test, therefore—the appeal to what must have been *understood at the time*,—serves to guard us against the opposite errors, of understanding figurative expressions literally, and of explaining away as a figure what was meant to be literally understood.

Danger of rash Attempts at Explanation.

§ 15. As for the latter of these errors, I have no doubt that the attempts of some persons to interpret as mere metaphor all the declarations of Scripture concerning Christ's offering of Himself, have been

greatly encouraged, and probably in many instances caused, by unwise and presumptuous endeavours to explain what Scripture has left unexplained, and to confirm what is there revealed to us, by reconciling it with theories of Man's devising. For, when objections which at least appear to some to be unanswerable, are brought against any such theory, it is too late to resort to the plea that divine mysteries are beyond the reach of our understanding, and that we must not venture to try them by the standard of human reason. Every one who brings forward a theory of his own, does in fact appeal to the tribunal of human reason, and binds himself to make his explanation intelligible and satisfactory. And when he fails to do this, the result will too often be that the doctrine itself which he seeks to elucidate and support by his explanations, will be supposed by many to be *dependent* on these, and will be rejected along with the untenable theory.

It is our wiser and safer course, therefore, as well as the more modest and

humble, to confine ourselves, in these matters, to the express declarations of the inspired Writers, and to warn men against listening to any one who ventures to go beyond these—who presents us with "developments" (as they are sometimes called) that are to fill up the omissions of Scripture, and who is thus in reality setting himself up as knowing more of the divine mysteries than was revealed to the Apostles; or at least more than they were commissioned to reveal to *us*. An humble, unlearned Christian, of ordinary common sense, may understand that he is guilty of no arrogance in rejecting any such teacher, however learned and ingenious, and that he is bound to do so.

None more learned or more ingenious are the generality of men likely to meet with than Bishop Butler, who thus expresses himself on this subject: "Christ offered Himself a propitiatory sacrifice, and made atonement for the sins of the world. . . . . And this sacrifice was, in the highest degree, and with the most extensive influence, of that efficacy for

obtaining pardon of sin, which the heathens may be supposed to have thought their sacrifices, and which the Jewish sacrifices were, in some degree, and with regard to some persons. *How, and in what particular way*, it had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have *endeavoured to explain;* but I *do not find that Scripture has* explained it." . . . . Again, "Some have endeavoured to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us, beyond what Scripture has authorized; others, probably *because they could not explain* it, have been for *taking it away*, and confining his office of Redeemer of the world, to his instruction, example, and government of the Church; whereas the doctrine of the Gospel appears to be, not only that he taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy it is, by what He did and suffered for us . . . . And it is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions on which it is offered, on *our* part, without disputing how it was procured, on his."

Such is the sober statement of that

truly great theologian, in his *Analogy*.[1] He was one who sought to know no *less*, and was *content* to know no *more*, of divine mysteries inscrutable to Man's Reason, than the inspired Writers tell us; and he guarded against the error of those presumptuous speculators, who, when the illumination from Heaven—the rays of Revelation—fail to shed such full light as they wish for, on the Gospel dispensation, are for bringing to the dial-plate the lamp of human philosophy.

And it is important that it should be clearly perceived, how much allied are the two opposite errors alluded to by Bishop Butler. It is a similar want of humble faith that leads one party to reject what they find it impossible to explain, and the other, to resolve to find an explanation of what they admit.

Faith shown by contented Ignorance of divine Mysteries.

§ 16. These latter, even if their explanations were really as satisfactory as, to themselves, that may appear, and if they did possess some knowledge beyond

[1] Part II., c. 5.

that of the Apostles—or beyond, at least, what the Apostles have imparted to us —yet could not, on that ground, claim the virtue of *faith*. For faith, it is plain, is to be measured rather by our ignorance than by our knowledge. Some knowledge, indeed, there must be, as a *foundation* for any intelligent faith to rest on; but the province of the faith itself, distinct from the basis on which it is built, must be that which we do *not* clearly understand. For "faith is the evidence of things not seen." There would be no exercise of faith in assenting to truths which are plainly demonstrated to our Reason, or in obeying commands whose reasonableness was clearly perceived. Faith—as distinguished from blind credulity—is shown, in taking the word of another whom we have good reason to rely on, for something which we do *not* clearly see or fully understand. Any one who in a dark night, at sea, believes, on the Pilot's word, that the ship is approaching the haven, shows more faith in that Pilot than others who fancy that they see the land before them. He may

be convinced that they are deceiving themselves, and are gazing on a fog-bank, which they mistake for land; but, at any rate, they cannot claim superior or equal *faith* to his.

We cannot, perhaps, better illustrate this truth—which, evident as it is, is often overlooked—than by referring to the trial made of Abraham, whose pre-eminently-confident trust in God is so strongly dwelt on in Scripture. His trial was quite different (and this is sometimes strangely overlooked) from what a similar command would have been to another man—to Noah, for instance, or to Moses—because, as is remarked in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the command was seemingly at variance with the promise he had received, that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called;" but "he trusted that God was able to restore him even from the dead;" and his faith and obedience were rewarded by the blessing pronounced; on which occasion doubtless it was, when he did receive his son from the dead in a figure [parabolè] that he "saw the day of Jesus, and was glad."

But if he had known beforehand how the transaction was to end, there would have been no trial of his faith, and no pre-eminent virtue in his obedience. He had the knowledge, indeed, on which his faith was based—the knowledge that he had received a promise, and also a command which appeared to nullify that promise; but how the two were to be reconciled, he was left ignorant till the trial was completed; and it was in his firm trust in the promise, and ready compliance with the command, while in that ignorance, that the virtue of his faith consisted.*

Abraham's Faith to be imitated.

§ 17. Such, then—we may plainly see,—is the example held out by Scripture for our imitation, of the faith of Abraham. If Abraham, instead of prompt and trustful compliance with the command, had set himself to devise interpretations of it, or demanded an explanation, he would have bewildered himself in presumptuous conjectures, and have forfeited the blessing. He had received a promise, and also a

* See *Lectures on the Parables*, Lect. xii.

command seemingly at variance therewith, from One whom he had good reason fully to trust; and he saw that it was his part not to raise questions about a divine command, but to obey it. Even thus, a dutiful and affectionate child of a wise and kind parent will say, "My father tells me to do so and so, and his will is reason enough for *me*. Doubtless there *are* good reasons, though unknown to me, for his command; and these he may perhaps hereafter explain to me; but, in the mean time, it is my duty to obey."

Such a child, we should observe, does not presume to pronounce that his father *has* no reason for his command, except that such is his pleasure; which would be to attribute to him caprice. On the contrary, he doubts not that there *is* good reason, both for giving the command, and for withholding the explanation of it. That such is the father's will, would be no good reason, to the father, for *giving* the command, but is a sufficient reason, to the child, for *obeying* it. For the child, therefore, to insist on it

that his father *had* no reasons, except his own will, for what he does, because he has not seen fit to make those reasons known, would be, not humility, but the height of rash presumption.* And we ought, no less, to trust, as no doubt Abraham did, that the Most High has good reasons, even when not revealed to us, for all his dealings with mankind.

Why, and how, it was necessary that the innocent blood should be shed for Man's redemption, we know no more—at least, from what the Scriptures tell us—than Abraham did, why he was commanded to offer up his son. And if we are asked how we know that this sacrifice was necessary, we should answer, because the

* "Those," says Calvin (and the same language is to be found in the writings of many of his followers, and of Augustine's) "whom God passes by, He condemns; "and that, for *no cause whatever, except* that He CHUSES "to exclude them from the inheritance" ["neque *alia de* "*causa* nisi quod illos VULT excludere."]

This is called by such writers setting forth the divine "sovereignty;" and yet there is not even any earthly sovereign who would not feel himself insulted by having it said or insinuated, that, when he announces, "our "will and pleasure is" so and so, he had, himself, no reason at all for the command issued, except that such was his will and pleasure.

Scriptures assure us that it did take place. It must, therefore, have been necessary, under the actual circumstances. We have no right to frame any metaphysical theories to prove that this necessity *would* have existed under any other, quite different, or even opposite circumstances. The actual state of things was, we know, that the majority of the Jewish nation refused to receive Jesus as the Christ; it being plainly the divine decree that they should not be compelled to receive Him against their will, by external force. And they thereupon condemned Him to death. We have no right to maintain that his death *would* have been necessary under the opposite supposition of a universal acceptance of his claims. On the contrary, we are expressly told by the inspired writers, "I wot that *through ignorance* ye did it; as did also your Rulers." (Acts iii.) "*Because* they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." "For if the princes of this world had known the wisdom of God, they *would not* have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. ii.)

"It may be needful," (says Bishop Butler, in a note,) "to mention, that several questions which have been brought into the subject before us, and determined, are not in the least entered into here; questions which have been, I fear, rashly determined, and perhaps with equal rashness, contrary ways. For instance, Whether God *could* have saved the world by other means than the death of Christ, consistently with the general laws of his government? And had not Christ come into the world, what would have been the future condition of the better sort of men . . . .? The meaning of the first of these questions is greatly ambiguous; and neither of them can be answered, without going upon that infinitely absurd position, that we know the whole of the case. And perhaps the very inquiry, *What would have followed if God had not done as He has?* may have in it some impropriety."*

Christ's Ministers, then, are bound to warn his people against mistaking for a

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Anal., b. ii. c. 5.

pre-eminent faith what is rather a deficiency of faith, and, for humility, what is in reality presumptuous rashness; and against being misled either by those who frame theories to explain what Scripture has left unexplained, or by those who, finding such theories untenable, reject what Scripture does assure us of.*

Practical Faith, in reference to the Eucharist.

§ 18. And the same really humble, unhesitating, submissive, and practical faith which we are required to have in the atoning Sacrifice of the Son of God, the same is called for in reference to that

* But seek not thou to understand
The deep and curious lore
With which full many a reckless hand
Has gloss'd these pages o'er.

Wait till He shall Himself disclose
Things now beyond thy reach;
But listen not, my child, to those
Who the Lord's secrets teach;

Who teach thee more than He has taught,
Tell more than He revealed,
Preach tidings which He never brought,
And read what He left sealed.

Bp. Hinds's *Poems.*

Feast on his sacrifice which we celebrate in the Eucharist; the Ordinance which, as was just now observed, is not only a *commemoration* of his death, but also a strong confirmation of its *sacrificial* character. The numerous and distinct declarations, indeed, to that effect, of the Sacred Writers, would alone afford sufficient grounds for the conviction of the understanding; but it has seemed good to divine Wisdom that we should not be left to search out passages of Scripture, and on these alone lay down the doctrine as a well-established article of our Creed, but that we should moreover be continually reminded of it by the often-repeated celebration of a Rite which clearly implies the doctrine, and forcibly impresses it on the mind.

And as with respect to the doctrine itself, so also as to the Ordinance which is a Seal and a monument of it, men have fallen into corresponding faults. While some have presumed—as was observed at the beginning—to frame theories not warranted by Scripture, others have been led, partly from that very cause, to reject or

very much to neglect the Ordinance itself. Fanciful speculations respecting the nature of Substance and Accidents tend naturally to cast a discredit, in the minds of the rash and unthinking, on a divine Institution, which has been thus deformed by an admixture of human devices; just as rash attempts at explanation of revealed mysteries that are quite beyond human reason, have led to the rejection, along with the human theories, of the doctrines themselves which are revealed. Anything quite alien from all notions of natural Reason, it is allowable to regard so far with distrust, as to require that it should be fully established by a sufficient Scripture-proof; and if not so established, we do well to reject it. But if it does appear to be plainly declared in Scripture, it then becomes a reasonable and suitable trial of our faith. Reason itself would pronounce that there must be much in the Counsels of the Most High that is beyond the reach of reason; and that positive commands respecting things originally indifferent, must justly claim obedience when coming from lawful authority. For

if we are to believe merely what we can fully understand and explain, and to do merely what appears to natural conscience to be a duty, independently of any command, this would be to make the word of our divine Master go for nothing.

Natural and Positive Duties.

§ 19. But it is remarkable that we may sometimes find even the very same persons objecting to what Scripture reveals or enjoins, unless they can see reason for it independent of Scripture, and yet expecting to find in Scripture what is *not* contained in it—exact precepts for every point of moral conduct.

One may sometimes find persons pleading, when they wish to evade some moral [*i.e.*, natural] duty, that there is no injunction as to this or that in the Bible; —that so and so is nowhere forbidden in Scripture; as if we had no Moral Faculty, and were to expect in Scripture a distinct and complete enumeration of things to be done and avoided, instead of the general precept, "*Whatsoever* things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and

honest, and of good report, to think on those things."*

And then, again, some, and perhaps the very same persons, when positive precepts are in question, will ask what efficacy there can be in a sprinkling with water, or in partaking of bread and wine. Why, if these did possess any such natural efficacy as we know our ordinary food has for sustaining the natural life, there would be no trial of our obedient faith in doing what the Lord commands, simply on the ground of that command. If the water of the pool of Siloam (as was remarked above) had been some medicinal spring that had the natural virtue to cure blindness, the blind man would have given no proof of faith in using it. But if, because there was no such virtue, he had refused to do what he was told—or if, like Naaman the Syrian, he had claimed a preference for some other waters—he would have remained blind.

But with respect to this point—I mean the distinction between what are called

* See *Lessons on Morals*, L. ii.; and also the following Lecture.

moral [*i.e.*,] natural duties, and positive duties,—things commanded because they are right, and things right because commanded,—there exists in many minds a strange confusion of thought. Any one who makes inquiries on the subject, for the first time, of those around him, will be surprised to find the extent to which this confusion prevails, even among persons not uneducated, nor, generally, deficient in intelligence.* And if we take occasion from time to time to put before our people such explanations as may guard them against these indistinct and confused notions on the subject, our labour will not have been superfluous or ill-applied.

Groundless Scruples.

§ 20. Far the greatest number, however, are kept back from the Lord's Table by a kind of misdirected reverential feeling of dread lest they should be "unworthy" partakers; as supposing that the ordinance is designed

* The well-known "Assembly of Divines" at Westminster were men whom even those who are far from accepting their dogmas, would not consider as destitute of intelligence or of learning. Yet on this point they seem to have been utterly abroad.

for those only who have attained to a certain perfection in holiness beyond what is required of Christians generally. But they should be reminded, that the unworthiness which the Apostle, and which our Reformers refer to, is a *careless and irreverent* partaking; a fault which in former times appears to have been prevalent; while in our own, a far different and rather opposite kind of error is the one most to be guarded against. It will not be difficult to explain to any one who is really influenced by conscientious scruples, that, though it is true there would be sinful profanation in coming to the Lord's Table thoughtlessly, and without any sincere devotion, the same may be said of *all* divine *worship*, and of the receiving of *religious instruction*, and of the *perusal of the Scriptures*. All these are duties, and so is the receiving of the Lord's Supper: and *all* these duties men ought to practise, *voluntarily*, *sincerely*, and heartily. We ought to be far from wishing to *compel* any one (supposing that were in our power) either to attend the Lord's Table, or to read the Bible, or to do *any* of these

things, against his will; or from urging him to go through the outward acts when his heart did not accompany them. But we should exhort men to pray and strive for those real sincere feelings of devotion which alone can make those acts well-pleasing to God.

And in confirmation of anything we ourselves may urge, when seeking to allay groundless scruples, we have the advantage of being able to direct the attention of our hearers to the written words of the Communion-Service itself, which disclaims all trust in our own righteousness—all meritorious "worthiness to gather up even the crumbs of the Lord's Table." And we should remind them also of the words of the Catechism respecting what is required of those who partake of this Sacrament. It can be easily explained to any one who is sincerely well disposed, that it is not the *communicant* alone, but every Christian who would hope for God's favour, that is required to "examine himself whether he repent him truly of his former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, and to have a lively faith in God's mercy through

Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and to be in charity with all men." Preparation for the Lord's Table, therefore, he can easily be brought to perceive, is the same as preparation for the whole christian life, and for a christian death, and for a joyful resurrection. The communicant, consequently, does not take on himself any new obligation that did not lie on him before. He will, indeed, be the more *likely* to lead a christian life, from his availing himself of the appointed means of grace; but the *obligation* to lead such a life is absolute and complete already. And it would be a manifest absurdity to imagine that a happy immortality could be attained on some different and easier terms by those who withdraw from the Lord's Table; that a refusal to comply with one of his commandments, would exempt men from obedience to the rest of them. Any one, therefore, who deems himself not good enough to receive this Sacrament, and accordingly absents himself, waiting till he shall become better prepared, is acting as the prodigal son in the parable would have done, if, instead of

arising at once to go to his father, he had waited till he should be in a more prosperous condition; when it was his father only that could supply food and raiment to the destitute returning outcast.

All this being what hardly any one would deliberately deny, it is found accordingly that most of the non-communicants have a design to communicate at some future time, before their death. And they seem to suppose that he who shall have done this, will have sufficiently complied with our Lord's injunction. We find many a one, accordingly, who needs to be earnestly and repeatedly reminded that *every time he refuses* the invitation to partake of the Lord's Supper, he is committing a fresh sin—a distinct act of disobedience to his divine Master. And, therefore, instead of preparing himself to be a more "meet partaker" of the heavenly feast, he is habitually alienating himself more and more from his Saviour, by thus resisting, time after time, his repeated calls.

Others again, and not a few, we meet with, who do present themselves at the

Lord's Table on some solemn occasions of rare recurrence, and who consider this as absolutely preferable to an habitual and frequent attendance, from finding that their devotional feelings are more strongly excited by a celebration that takes place at long intervals. But they should be reminded that (though this is undoubtedly true) if they were to act on such a consideration throughout, they would discontinue daily prayer, and habitual attendance on all public worship; since these would certainly more strongly affect the feelings if they were of very rare occurrence. But the object to be aimed at is, not an occasional, fervid, and probably transitory emotion, but an habitual, effectual, and lasting influence on the whole character, and daily life;—not a passing gleam of enthusiasm, but a steady daylight that shall enlighten our path and guide our steps.

Connexion of Confirmation with the Eucharist.

§ 21. Such errors as I have adverted to we are often the best able to combat in private conversations, adapted to the

peculiar habits of thought and tone of feeling of each individual. And of all the occasions for doing this, none can be more suitable than that of preparing young persons for the Rite of Confirmation. For, the earlier any erroneous notions are counteracted, the less is the danger of their leading to an inveterate practical habit. It is of great importance, therefore (as I have above pointed out), that those confirmed should have the earliest possible opportunity of attending at the Lord's Table, and should be earnestly pressed to avail themselves of it at once. And this will tend to correct the mistake (above noticed), which is sometimes to be met with even in religious parents, of imagining that a young person may be unfit, in point of religious knowledge or of feeling, for receiving the Eucharist, and yet fit to be presented for Confirmation. It may easily be explained to them that, as this is manifestly a groundless notion, at variance with all reason, so it is no less at variance with the decisions of our Church. That all the members of the Church should be

Communicants, is not only in many places implied, but is expressly laid down in a Rubric. And the only limitation given of this word "*all*" is, where it is enacted that those only shall come to the holy Table who have "been *confirmed*, or are ready and desirous to be confirmed:" which plainly implies that at least all who *have* been confirmed are bound to attend that Table. This should be carefully impressed on the minds of the People. And, universally, we should use all the means in our power for removing every obstacle, of whatever kind, to that full and frequent attendanee at the Lord's Table which our Reformers, in conformity with apostolic usage, manifestly designed.* The great length of the entire Church-Service, when the Eucharist is administered, probably tends to foster the notion, that our Reformers—since they could not have designed anything physically impossible—could not have meant that *all* the parishioners should be regular communicants. In some populous parishes ac-

* On another point connected with the same subject, there are some remarks in Bishop Copleston's *Remains*.

cordingly there is, several times in the year, an early celebration, at which the Communion-Service alone is used. And this, besides other advantages, tends to do away that notion just alluded to."

We may cherish a hope then—a hope in some degree fortified by experience—that by sedulously availing ourselves of such occasions as I have been adverting to, we may at least somewhat diminish that great and crying evil, the open practical neglect by a large proportion of our congregations, of an acknowledged duty: an evil which the truly pious must have often contemplated both with grief for the individuals, and with shame on account of the scandal it brings on our Church. At any rate, let no exertions be wanting on our part to set before our people what their duty is, "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear;" so that *we*, at least, may not be chargeable with neglecting our own duty, and may be "pure from the blood of all men."

LECTURE VI.

CHRISTIAN MORAL-INSTRUCTION.

Inculcation of Moral-Duty.

§ 1. THE inculcation of Moral-Duty is one of the most important, and not one of the least difficult of the pastoral offices. Not only must men be warned against resting satisfied with what the Apostle calls a "dead faith," bringing forth no fruits, but they must be guarded also against the error of expecting that strong religious feelings will at once, and of themselves, produce holiness of life, without need of any care, or effort, on our part. From God indeed "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed;" even as it is He who sends the rain and the sunshine from heaven, without which the labour of the husbandman would be vain. But these gifts are sent to encourage that labour, and not that he may sit still in idleness. And even so,

the commands and the promises which we find in Scripture, afford, not a reason for carelessness, but the strongest motive and the greatest encouragement to us, to learn, and to teach, and to practise christian duty with the most sedulous diligence.

That those who have recently joined our Church, as converts, have, as a general rule, exhibited a marked improvement in their moral conduct, I have reason to be fully convinced. But I would warn every one against being led by this, into a hasty security as to that point. For, we should remember that those who have been among the first to dare to encounter obloquy, derision, privations, and often severe persecution, in embracing on deliberate conviction, what they regard as a true faith, will have been actually *practising* a very difficult *virtue;* and will therefore be such as may be expected to make the rest of their life of a piece with that beginning. The sacrifices already made by them will have both *proved* and *fortified* their virtue. But as persecution abates, and converts multiply,

it may be expected that more and more persons will join their ranks, whose moral principles are less pure, or less firm. And moreover, the secondary motive (and though a secondary, it is a legitimate, and a very strong motive) of wishing to recommend the cause one has embraced, by marked correctness of conduct, and to dread bringing any discredit on it,—this is always found to operate the most strongly at the *beginning*, and when the cause is supported by but a small minority. In proportion as any cause becomes popular and strong, its adherents are apt to become more secure, and to relax their vigilance as to their own and their companions' conduct.

We may see instances of the operation of that secondary motive I have been speaking of, and of its subsequent relaxation, in the history of many Sects and Parties, including some of the most erroneous. For instance, that most extraordinary modern sect, the Mormonites, began by pretensions (among other things) to a peculiarly strict morality. And it is certain, that, for the time, their conduct

was, apparently at least, so conformable to these pretensions, as to have contributed not a little to the attracting of proselytes. It was not till after they had gained great strength, that they introduced and sanctioned that outrageous profligacy which had been by their original laws strictly forbidden. And again, the moral code of the Koran, and the practice of Mahomet and his first adherents, became relaxed, as is well known, in proportion as their numbers and their strength increased.

And that this is not a danger to which *false* religions alone are liable, we have abundant proofs in Scripture. Even so early as the times of the Apostles, we find that many had begun to join the christian ranks whose conduct was such as to bring discredit on their profession. We find,—besides many other earnest warnings to this effect—Paul speaking to Timothy of men "considering the profession of Christianity as a source of profit."*

I would press then very strongly on

* This is manifestly the sense of the Original, (1 Tim. vi. 5,) not "supposing that gain is godliness."

all christian Instructors, and not least, on the instructors of recent Converts,—the Apostle's precept to Titus, (ch. iii. v. 8), "These things I will that thou affirm constantly," (*i.e.* "insist on earnestly;")* in order that they who have believed in God may be *careful* to maintain good works.†

Romish and Protestant Views of Justification.

§ 2. And this caution is perhaps even peculiarly needed when the question is between the Reformed and the unreformed Churches; because the chief difference between them many persons would describe by saying that the one teaches "Justification by Faith," and the other, "Justification by Works." And this description might be set forth in such a manner as to lead the one side to adopt, and the other to impute, the teaching of what the Apostle James calls a "dead faith," without good works.

But the above description cannot be

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* διαβεβαιοῦσθαι.

† φροντίζωσι καλῶν ἔργων προΐστασθαι

received as a correct one without considerable explanations and modifications. For (1) in the first place, the Romanist cannot be said to reject or to disparage Faith. He is taught to believe—and to hold it essential to salvation to believe—(besides many important doctrines held by our own Church also) much that to us appears mere human device. He has faith in the infallibility of the Church of Rome,—in the efficacy of prayers addressed to the Virgin and other Saints,—in the supposed sacrifice of the Mass,—in priestly Absolution,—and in many other things which Protestants reject. And moreover, many even of the good works by which he seeks to obtain the divine favour, are most emphatically the fruit of faith—though to us it appears an utterly misplaced faith—in his Church; since they are such as are not dictated by any natural moral principle, but are practised solely on the ground of a supposed divine injunction or sanction: such as Pilgrimages, Penances, and various ceremonial observances, which no one would account naturally and intrinsically virtues, or could

ever think of practising except through faith in a supposed divine injunction.

On the other hand, the expression is not quite correct, that a Protestant looks for Justification *by* faith. "*Through* faith," is the more exact language. And though the word "by" is used (doubtless through inadvertency) in the XIth Article, the meaning of our Reformers is quite clear, not only from their language elsewhere, but from the original Latin of that very Article; which speaks of justification not "*propter* fidem," but "*per* fidem." "Propter," they apply to the meritorious sacrifice of Christ; ["propter meritum"] which corresponds with the language of the Apostle—"*By* Grace are ye saved, *through* Faith."*

In fact it is plain that if the believer were saved—strictly speaking, *by* his faith—he would be as much himself his own saviour, as if he were saved by his works. When our Lord said to the woman who had touched the hem of his garment, and on other occasions, "Thy faith hath saved

* Eph. ii. 8.

thee," He is only using a mode of expression such as we often use ourselves, when we would call attention to some *distinguishing* circumstance; to which we attribute something that has taken place, without meaning, or being understood to mean, that it is the real efficient cause, but merely the one circumstance out of many which makes the *difference* between the case before us, and others. For instance, we speak of some tender plant which has perished in the winter *in consequence* of its being *left uncovered;* though we know that the *frost* was the *cause* of its destruction; but we mention the circumstance which alone *distinguished* it from some other plants of the same kind. Even so, that woman was one among many who had equally the power to approach Jesus, and several of whom probably had need of healing: but what distinguished her from the rest, and through which she obtained relief, was her superior faith.

But faith is, as some have justly expressed it, merely the *hand* which lays hold of the free offer of divine mercy.

And faith, such as our Reformers taught, must be both rightly directed—towards an object which we have good ground for relying on, and also, must be what they call a "lively" [*i.e.* living] faith, bringing forth good works as a necessary fruit.*

Danger of exaggerated Language.

§ 3. All this is of course what you hold, and mean to inculcate: for I am not addressing myself to Antinomians: but there is need of a caution against some indiscreet and exaggerated language into which well-intentioned persons are occasionally betrayed, in their zeal against some particular error, and which may lead weak-minded or thoughtless hearers into other and not less dangerous errors.

To take one instance: you may have heard the expression "all our righteousness is as filthy rags" introduced as a condemnation of the error of a Man's claiming merit in God's sight for any good actions. But this is an utter misapplica-

tion of the words of the Prophet; who is speaking not in disparagement of men who had been *obedient* to God's laws, but, on the contrary, of those he had been describing as most emphatically the reverse. "Behold," says he, "Thou art wroth, for we *have sinned;* . . . . we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our *iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away*, and there is none that calleth on thy name."* His expression is only another way of saying "we are quite destitute of all righteousness," even as the same Prophet [Is. i.] describes a like condition by saying "thy silver is become dross."

True it is indeed that it would be most absurd for any one—Jew or Gentile—to claim merit in the sight of his Maker for even a more perfectly righteous course of obedience than any man can pretend to have practised. But this is surely a truth which may be, and which ought to be, established and inculcated without resorting to a perversion of any passage of

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* Isaiah, lxiv. 5-7.

Scripture into a different sense from that of the inspired Writer. And any such misapplication (or, as some call it, "accommodation") of Scripture, besides that it is in itself a blameable presumption, is likely to damage the cause of truth,—to mislead those we are instructing,—and to give an advantage to opponents. These last may represent us as teaching —what after all is not true—that the "keeping of Christ's commandments," which He has Himself declared to be the only proof of our "loving Him"—the "bringing forth of much fruit," by which He has said that "his Father is *glorified*"* —that all this is regarded by Him as "filthy rags."

And not only should no such interpretation of Paul or of James be given as shall set them in opposition (since no Church, as our XXth Article expresses it, "May so interpret one part of Scripture as to contradict another,")† but care

* John xv.

† Those commentators—for unhappily there are some few such—who interpret Rom. vii. 14-25 not, as a description, generally (which was doubtless the Apostle's meaning) of the condition of a man under the

should also be taken to point out how they are to be reconciled, in what they say of the justification of Abraham. For surely those who do represent the teaching of these two Apostles as at variance, must have a most confused and incorrect notion of both. James is manifestly speaking (Ch. ii.) in disparagement of a faith consisting in mere assent of the understanding. "Thou believest," says he, "that there is one God; thou doest well: the Demons* also believe and tremble." Now can any one really suppose that the saving Faith insisted on by Paul was this faith of Demons? Or

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Law and not under the Gospel, but as a literal account of Paul's own actual state at the time, make this portion of Scripture contradict not only other parts, but even the very next passage in the same Epistle: Ch. viii. v. 1-13. For it is clearly impossible for the same man to be at the same time "sold under sin,"—"brought "into subjection to the law of sin," &c., and also "made free from the law of sin," and "walking not "after the flesh but after the Spirit."—(See *Essays on the Dangers, &c.* Essay i. § 4.)

* The word "devils" which occurs here and elsewhere in our Version is a manifest mistranslation of Daimonia. The word Diabolos is never used in the plural number; being the designation of a single individual.

again, can it be believed that James, when speaking of good works, meant mere outward acts, without any reference to the inward motive—the faith, from which they spring? And this too, when he expressly says, "I will show thee my faith by my works?"

If any one had suggested to this Apostle such an interpretation of his words, he might have refuted the error exactly in the way he does refute the one he is opposing. He might have said, "It is a good thing to proclaim Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God—to do so, is a good work: the Demons whom Jesus cast out, did this: they found themselves compelled to cry out, 'I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God:' but this did not make them acceptable before God; for, works good in themselves, but not done from a good motive, are as much the *works* of Demons, as mere intellectual belief is the faith of Demons."

If any one then should ask whether we are to be justified *partly* through Faith and partly through Works, you might reply that the question is as idle a one as

if he should ask concerning a house that had been destroyed by fire, whether the conflagration was to be attributed to the wood and other combustible substances within it, or to the firebrand which fell on them, or partly to the one, and partly to the other. We all know that no quantity of combustibles could at all contribute to the breaking out of a fire, if no spark fell on them; and again, that a firebrand, if it fell on a stone pavement, would produce no such effect at all. And in like manner, in this case, neither a faith which does not show itself in obedience, nor again good works which do not spring from faith, can go one step towards recommending any one to God; but only as the Apostle expresses it, "faith which *worketh* by love."*

Supposed Merit of Good-Works.

§ 4. As for those who do need to be warned against the error of imagining that a man can earn salvation for himself by good works, and that these can establish a claim of merit before God, you will find these

* Galat. v. 6.

persons, I think, to fall under these three classes:—(1.) Those who mean by "good works," not a life of what can be called christian virtue, but outward ceremonial observances; such as the Judaizers of old trusted to.* (2.) Secondly, such as are

* Accordingly, in our Lord's Parable of the Pharisee and Publican, the good works on which the former "exalted himself" were "fasting twice in the week, "and scrupulously giving tithes." And our Lord expressly charges them with being, while thus scrupulous as to the tithes of sweet herbs, neglectful of "the "weightier matters of the Law, Justice and Mercy." Hence He requires of his followers that their "right-"eousness should *exceed* the righteousness of the "Scribes and Pharisees," if they would "enter into the "kingdom of Heaven." For, those "Works of the "Law" by which they "went about to establish their "own righteousness," (Rom. x. 3,) and of which Paul says that a man is "justified *without* them," (Rom. iv. 6,) were manifestly the "works" of the Ceremonial Law.

No doubt he *would*, if he had ever met with the case (which it does not appear he ever did,) of a man seeking self-justification by a life of moral virtue, have denounced that error. But as it is, the persons he was actually censuring as trusting in their "own righteousness which is by the Law," were such as trusted in the Ceremonial Law.

That this portion of the Mosaic Law, though far from being the most important portion, should yet be often called, emphatically, "The Law," is quite intelligible, since it was the *distinguishing* portion of it;—that which marked the difference between the Jews and the Gentile. See Philipp. ch. iii., where Paul

very far from leading, on the whole, a moral life, or even striving to do so, or themselves thinking that they have attained it, but who pride themselves on the practice of some one or two [supposed] virtues, which they trust to as not only compensating for all failures in other points, but moreover entitling them to reward: and (3.) thirdly, such as imagine that a strictly virtuous life *would* earn immortal happiness, but who are fully conscious of not being, *themselves*, qualified to make this claim, and who accordingly trust in the divine mercy for themselves, *without* good works; considering that it is only so far as they are *sinners*, that a divine Saviour is at all needed. And none are more likely to "continue in sin that Grace may abound," than those who imagine that a life of

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speaks of himself as being "touching the righteousness "which is of the Law, blameless;" not, surely, as attributing to himself perfect *moral rectitude;* for, his "zeal in persecuting the Church," which he speaks of in that very passage, he always bewailed as a grievous sin; but evidently, an exact compliance with the Ceremonial Law.—See *Essays on the Dangers, &c.,* Essay i.

eminent virtue would merit Heaven; and that, consequently, one who should be endeavouring to lead such a life, would be seeking not to embrace the Gospel-offers, but to supersede and dispense with them.

But as for the case of a man deliberately and habitually striving to conform his moral character and whole conduct to the Gospel-standard, and believing that he succeeds in this endeavour, and thereupon trusting in this his virtuous life as establishing a claim of merit, and entitling him to a happy immortality—such a case, if it ever does occur, is, I must think, a very improbable and very rare one. Each will best know what his own experience has been. I, for my part, am not aware of having ever met with an instance of the kind; though of the other three above-mentioned, I have known many. As far as my own observation extends, those who the most assiduously labour to lead a christian life, I have always found the very furthest from setting up any plea of merit, or at all dreaming of self-justification. And it certainly will not be the most profitable course, to dwell

continually and almost exclusively on the inefficiency of a life of thorough-going christian virtue to merit eternal happiness, when addressing hearers of whom one portion have no thought at all of leading such a life, while the remainder have no thought of thus *meriting* heaven. It will be more edifying to the hearers, though not perhaps more acceptable, to provide what after all is the surest safeguard against the errors above noticed, by giving men correct notions of what are the true principles of moral conduct, and urging them to act on these.

Correct View of moral Duty.

§ 5. (1.) Let it be pointed out, in the first place (as may be easily done, to any one of even moderate capacity), that no one can claim merit, or be entitled to a reward, for merely paying a *debt;* and that evidently all obedience to God's laws must be a debt strictly due to Him, and could therefore claim from Him, if perfect, nothing beyond exemption from punishment, except on the ground of his own free and bountiful promise. "When ye have

done," says our Lord [Luke xvii. 10], "all things that I have commanded you, say, we are *unprofitable* servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do."

(2.) It should be pointed out also, that even our *power* to do anything well-pleasing in the sight of our divine Master, must come from Himself, the "true vine, of which we are the branches,"—even from his "spirit which helpeth our infirmities." For "without me," says He, "ye can do nothing." The guests at his "wedding-feast" must indeed themselves be clad in the "wedding-garment" of christian holiness of life; but it is He who provides the garment which the guest is required to put on.

(3.) Men should also be reminded that "good works," in the sense of external acts, are not, in themselves, even virtuous; but can only be so called, as far as they are indications of that inward disposition which alone is strictly to be called virtuous. For it is evident that the very same act may be either morally good, or evil, or indifferent, according to the motive it springs from.

(4.) It should be added that since the Most High can have no *need* of our services, it is for *our own* benefit, not for his, that good works are required of us.

(5.) And, lastly, men should be warned that they are not to look (as some are disposed to do) for express commands and prohibitions in Scripture, as to everything they are to do or abstain from; regarding themselves as blameless so long as, and so far as, they have not transgressed any distinct precept delivered on divine authority.

That is indeed a safe rule as to what relates to *positive* precepts respecting things that are in themselves indifferent. But as regards moral conduct generally, the Scriptures do not profess to lay down any complete ethical system, but exhort Christians to think on and practise "*whatsoever* things are pure, whatsoever things are honest, and lovely, and of good report;"* and "giving all diligence to add to their faith, virtue, and temperance, and patience,"† and the like.

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* Phil. iv. 8. † 2 Pet. i. 5.

Our Lord and his Apostles do indeed warn men against the particular faults to which the particular persons they were on each occasion addressing, were especially liable, and urge on them the practice of whatever duties they were most likely to neglect; but they never address themselves as to persons wholly destitute of all moral faculty, needing to be taught the difference, generally, between virtue and vice. They supply occasional *cautions* as to our moral conduct; they bring forward strong *motives* for holiness of life, such as no human system or precepts could afford; and they hold out promises of such heaven-sent support and aid as human weakness needs: but they evidently proceed always on the supposition that men do use—and always have used—such words as "virtue" and "vice," and have always attached some meaning to those words, and understood that the one is preferable to the other.

Theory of those who deny a Moral-sense.

§ 6. It might seem superfluous to set forth such obvious truths, were it not that

a contrary doctrine is maintained by some writers, and, among others, by so able and justly-celebrated an author as Dr. Paley, in a work which has been used as a text-book in some of our universities; and, moreover, that his views on this point are advocated by some—and those not a few—who are very far indeed from concurring with his views on other points.*

He—as is well known—maintains that Man has no moral faculty whatever, and feels naturally no disapprobation of ingratitude and baseness, or approbation of gratitude and integrity, nor, in short, perceives any distinction at all between virtue and vice. All our notions, according to him, of what is called moral obligation, are derived from conformity to the will of a Superior, with a view to our own interest. And the distinction accordingly between what are commonly called "moral precepts" and "positive precepts"—things commanded because right, and things right because commanded—

* I have since edited *Paley's Moral Philosophy*, with Annotations, in which I have endeavoured to correct some of his views.

he completely does away. And I cannot but think that ordinary men will be likely, so far as they adopt his view, to fall into that error I have just been noticing—of looking in Scripture for precise directions as to each point of conduct, laid down as plainly as the directions, for instance, respecting the Passover or the Sabbath, to the Israelites, or the institution of the Sacraments, to Christians: and to consider themselves as bound by nothing but such express commands and prohibitions as they meet with. For one cannot expect that above one person in a hundred will follow out those subtle calculations by which Dr. Paley deduces all moral conduct from conformity to the divine will.

And this conformity we are to aim at, according to him, with a view solely to our own eventual benefit. "The difference," he says, "and the only difference, between an act of prudence and an act of virtue is, that in the one case we consider what we *shall gain or lose* in the present life, and in the other case, what we shall gain or lose in the next life." And then he goes on to say, very strangely, that those who have no

knowledge, or no belief, of a future state, must frame the best theory of virtue they can for themselves; unless they can show that virtue produces the greatest amount of happiness in this world. It is wonderful that so acute a writer should have failed to perceive that according to what he had just said, they *could not possibly* form *any* theory at all of Virtue as distinguished from Prudence; since if they did teach (as in fact the ancient Heathen Philosophers did) that what we call Virtue does conduce to happiness in this life, this would never have enabled them to draw a *distinction* between prudence and virtue, but would have made them identical. For it is evident that to remove the "difference, and the only difference" between any two things, is to make them perfectly alike. And he had just before said that the only difference between prudence and virtue depends on the distinction between the present and a future life.

His doctrine, therefore, is completely overthrown by the Writings of the Heathen: not by any assumed *correctness*

of their views, but by the very words they employ. For their using such words as "Virtus" and Ἀρετη,—their distinguishing between "Utile" and "Honestum,"—between συμφερον and καλον,—proves that they must have perceived a distinction, which, on Dr. Paley's theory, they could not possibly have perceived, and must have formed notions such as could no more have entered their minds, were that theory correct, than a man born blind could form a notion of colours.*

The heathen Philosophers had, indeed, in their moral systems many errors and deficiencies which the Gospel serves to correct. But, after all, they did teach morality; and the systems moreover which they framed are much superior to what many suppose and represent them, who have never read them, and judge only by hearsay. The great deficiency in their systems was their lack of such motives as the Gospel supplies, and of that divine support and aid which is pro-

* See Bp. Fitzgerald's *Introduction to a Vol. of Selections from Aristotle's Ethics;* and also *Introductory Lessons on Morals* (Parker: West Strand).

mised to the sincere Christian. A heathen Moralist resembled the fabled Prometheus of old, who is said to have fashioned a complete and well-formed human body, but could not endue it with the principle of *life*, till he had ascended to Heaven to fetch down from thence a vivifying fire. And any christian Minister who should confine himself to what are sometimes (erroneously) called "practical sermons," —*i.e.*, mere moral essays, without any mention of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity—is in the same condition with those heathen philosophers; with the difference, that what was *their* misfortune, is his fault.

Unenlightened however as those philosophers were, they did perceive and teach those distinctions in human actions, which, on Dr. Paley's theory, they could not possibly have had any notion of. As for all that he says elsewhere, of men's having observed the good effects of honesty, temperance, &c., and the ill effects of their contraries, and thus acquiring a habit of approving the one and disapproving the other; this does

not affect the present question; since all these observations and reasonings could never generate the idea of *duty*,—of *moral* rectitude,—and of *sin*. For, observation and experience have equally taught intelligent cultivators the beneficial effects of properly manuring the land, and of rotation of crops, and the ill consequences of neglecting such rules. And even the veriest savages have learnt from experience what wild fruits and roots are nutritious, and what unwholesome. But men have never formed a habit of extending to such matters *moral* approbation and disapprobation. And no more would they, on any other points, have formed any notions of moral right and wrong, were the theory I have been considering a correct one.

Incautious Language respecting human Depravity.

§ 7. But there are (as I have said) some persons who, though very far indeed from adopting Dr. Paley's views on other points, yet concur with him in this; at least in the language they use. They speak in such strong terms of the

depravity—at least since the Fall—of Man's nature, as in fact to do away that depravity altogether, and put an end not only to all Virtue, but to all Vice also. For, it is plain, on a moment's reflection, that a Being who is incapable of perceiving any difference (as is the case with the brute creation) between moral good and evil, or of forming any notion of such a thing as Duty, cannot, however odious in our eyes his acts may be (as are those of a wolf or swine), be taxed with *sin* and moral guilt. And accordingly no one does apply those terms to a brute, or a new-born infant, or a complete idiot. Nor, in like manner, do we apply the term "folly" to the acts of animals destitute of reason. We always consider "folly" as consisting in acting against the dictates of reason; and, consequently, as *implying* rationality; and "sin," as a transgression of the rules of moral rectitude which we know, or which we possibly might have known: rules which men have, according to the Apostle Paul, some notion of, however imperfectly they may conform to them in prac-

tice; "their conscience," says he, "also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing, or else excusing, one another."*

And as for the introduction of any positive laws—the issuing of commands—by one possessing the power to enforce them,—a revelation of the divine Will made to a creature wholly devoid of moral faculty,—that would not at all change his character in this respect, though it would influence his external acts. To comply with the will of one fully able to enforce that will, would be regarded (and this indeed is precisely Dr. Paley's view) as a matter of *expediency:* but the words "right" and "wrong" would be, to such a Being, as unmeaning as ever. If any one, for instance, were to fall into the hands of robbers who commanded him on pain of death to surrender his property; or if he had been subjected (as several nations have been) to a merciless tyrant, he might judge it advisable to comply, and submit, if he had

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* Rom. ii. 15. See *Cautions for the Times*, No. 27, p. 464.

no hope of resistance or escape; but he would never think of such a thing as moral Duty, and rectitude, in such submission. And precisely similar would be submission to the divine laws, in such a Being as Dr. Paley represents Man.

One circumstance which probably contributes to confusion of thought on this subject, in the minds of some persons, is this: that in this or that *particular point*, a divine command may *make* that a duty which was not so before. But this can only be when the command is given to a Being possessing a moral sense which enables him to perceive that there *is such a thing* as duty, and that God has a *rightful claim* to our obedience. And, in like manner, a telescope will enable a man possessing the sense of sight, to see objects invisible to the naked eye. But the revelation of a divine command could no more *originate* the notion of Duty, generally, in a Being destitute of moral faculty, and to whom, consequently, the word "duty" could convey no meaning, than a telescope could confer sight on a blind man.

Real Meaning different from what is expressed.

§ 8. But many persons (as I have already hinted) agree with the doctrine I have been speaking of, in the language they incautiously employ, without really meaning what their words express. It may seem paradoxical to speak of any one's not knowing his own meaning. But in many cases you may make it plain even to the party himself, that his real belief on some point is not what he—with perfect sincerity of intention—declares it to be. If any persons, for instance, state it as their conviction that the foundation of all our moral notions is the Will of God,—that it is our knowledge or belief of what He requires or forbids, that constitutes the whole of the distinction we perceive between Right and Wrong,—you may ask them whether they consider obedience to the divine will to be merely a matter of *prudence*, or, over and above this, of *moral duty* also? whether they regard the Almighty as a *good* Being, or merely as possessing supreme power? whether his commands are *right*, and *justly* claim our compliance,

or merely are such that it would be very *rash* to resist them?

If they reply,—as the great majority will,—that moral goodness, as well as power, is an attribute of the Most High, —that his commands are *right*, and that obedience is *justly* due to Him—then they will have admitted that our notions of moral rectitude are *not* originally derived merely from that of conformity to the divine Will, but are a part of the constitution of the human mind; since else, it would be nugatory and absurd to speak of the divine goodness, if our only idea of moral goodness were, what God wills. And to say that his commands are *just*, and that it is *right* for men to obey them, would only be a circuitous way of saying, (as indeed Dr. Paley himself is compelled to admit) that what is commanded is commanded, and that the divine Will is—the divine Will.

I think therefore that we shall usually find it not very difficult to explain (as it will often be very desirable to do) to a person of tolerable intelligence and can-

dour, who may have been incautiously using such language as I have been alluding to, that his own real opinion is different from what he had described and supposed it to be; and that while intent on setting forth in the strongest manner God's glory and Man's sinfulness, he had, by rash and exaggerated expressions, done away completely the moral attributes of the Deity, and the existence of any such thing as sin.

And you may point out also, that the appeal often made to the moral excellence of the Gospel in confirmation of its divine origin, is wholly destroyed by the use of such language. If an infidel be asked, "How it happens that a set of ignorant Jewish peasants should have discovered and taught a purer morality than the wisest of the heathen Sages had ever discovered?"* he will be at no loss for an answer, if you describe Man as having no notion of moral right and wrong except a conformity to the teaching of those very peasants. Your argument will then become pre-

* *Cautions for the Times*, No. 29, p. 506.

cisely similar to the alleged miracle by which the Mahometans profess to prove the divine origin of the Koran. All the best Arabic scholars, they urge, agree as to the superior,—and as they say,—superhuman—purity and beauty of its language, and find all other compositions more or less approaching perfection, according as they approach more or less to the style of the Koran. But then it comes out that they have all agreed to establish the style of the Koran as the standard, and judge of the purity and beauty of each word and phrase by a reference to that: so that the argument is a manifest circle.

And it would be no less proceeding in a circle to speak of the purity of the Gospel-morality, and of the goodness of God, if Man were a Being destitute of all moral faculty.

And you may add also, that there can be no blameable presumption in us Creatures forming these judgments respecting the moral attributes of the Creator, which He has Himself expressly *told us* to form.

"Are not," says He, "my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?"* And "why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?"†

Scripture View of moral Obedience.

§ 9. On many a particular point indeed we must often be unable to perceive the reasons of God's dealings with his creatures, from our ignorance of many of the circumstances of the case; and we are bound (as I observed above), not only to obey his commands, but to trust in their wisdom and goodness even when we cannot understand them. But all this is of a piece even with what we feel and do towards our fellow-men. A dutiful and affectionate child,‡ for instance, will be fully convinced (and not without reason) of the goodness, and the superior judgment, of a kind and sensible parent, and will comply cheerfully with his directions, even when not understanding the reasons of them;—all the more cheerfully, on the

* Ezek. xviii. 29. † Luke xii. 57.
‡ See Essay on the *Imitation of Children*.

ground of that very conviction, and not, as merely yielding to superior power, and calculating on reward or punishment. So also, a friend on whose worth and discretion we fully rely, will perhaps take some measures which, on that very ground, we presume to be the right ones, before we have sufficient knowledge of particulars to judge of the case itself. And we should think it strange to have it inferred from this that our whole estimate of his character was nothing but a blind partiality, and that we had no notion at all of what *are* good or bad measures, except as they are or are not, his.

Again, in all that regards conduct, you may easily, I think, point out that not only—as was said just now—the Sacred Writers all along proceed on the supposition that "right" and "wrong" are not, to their hearers, mere unmeaning sounds, but also that one most important declaration* of our Lord's must become unintelligible, and utterly absurd, on the supposition of a total absence of moral

* Luke xii. 48.

faculty: "The servant who knew not his lord's will, and did commit *things worthy of stripes*, shall be beaten with few stripes." Now that one who "knew his lord's will and did it not" should receive the heavier punishment, is a rule which one may readily understand: but that one who "knew *not* his lord's will"—that is, who had not received any express command—*could* "commit things worthy of stripes" is utterly inconceivable on the supposition of Man's notions of right and wrong being originally derived entirely from a knowledge of the divine Will.

But in truth, as Bishop Butler justly remarks, "what renders any one justly liable to punishment, is, not the *expectation* of it, but the violation of a known duty." Many of the brutes, as we all know, are capable of being incited by reward, and deterred by punishment; yet we do not regard them as moral agents; though, on the theory I have been speaking of, they would be as much so as Man.

And I must say, that, considering what sound and clear views of the nature of

duty that great Moralist Bishop Butler had put forth, it does seem strange that any persons having his works before them, should turn from these, and go back to the theory of Hobbes, and others of that school, who destroy all *moral* obligation properly so called, and resolve all *obligation* into submission, from views of self-interest, to arbitrary physical force. It is as if the Prodigal, in the Parable, had turned aside from the feast prepared for him, to feed by choice, on the husks.

Origin and Culture of the Moral Faculty.

§ 10. The true sense in which it may be said that all our notions of moral duty are derived originally from the Will of God, is this: that it was his will to create Man a Moral-agent—a Being endowed with a conscience, and distinguished from the Brute-creation, in great measure by that. It is a faculty developed in very various degrees in different individuals; often left grievously uncultivated, or depraved and corrupted; but one which is capable of improvement, and which we are required, and through

divine help, enabled, profitably to cultivate. And so far is it from being anything hostile, or anything of a rival, to Religion, or a pretended substitute for it, that on the contrary it is by this only that we are enabled to perceive that God is not merely a ruler who is *able to enforce* obedience, but is justly entitled to obedience, and a proper object of our gratitude and love.

And let no one apprehend that by clearly setting forth and earnestly dwelling on these truths, he will run any risk of leading men to think too highly of their own moral proficiency, or to trust in their good works for salvation. The very opposite is the real state of the case: for it is only so far forth as any Being does possess some Moral-sense, that he can possibly feel any conviction of *sin* when he has transgressed any divine command; or indeed can, strictly speaking, *commit* any sin. Without this, he might indeed apprehend *danger* from offending a powerful superior; even as we should do in embarking on a stormy sea; but of guilt, and moral turpitude, he could

have no notion whatever. And the more highly cultivated any one's moral judgment is, the more clearly will he perceive and the more strongly feel, whatever imperfections are still adhering to his character; even as a strong light admitted into a chamber that had been partially darkened, makes conspicuous every stain on its walls that had before been scarcely perceptible.

Works the Fruit of Faith, in what sense.

§ 11. I have dwelt thus earnestly on several points, which, to many, probably, have been long since familiar, because at this particular time, some will have to impart almost the first rudiments of christian morality to persons who have been hitherto nearly strangers to the practical influence either of Religion altogether, or of a true religion: men who have either learned to disregard the religious system in which they were brought up, without putting any other in its place, or who have been accustomed to regard good works as consisting principally, not, as Paul describes them, in "things good and profit-

able to mankind;"* but in pilgrimages, fasts, indiscriminate alms to street-beggars, telling of beads, and the like.

Now when these, and when all men, are taught, as they certainly ought to be, the importance of a pure, and well-founded, and firm christian Faith, and that a life of christian virtue is a necessary and invariable accompaniment of such a faith, it should be kept in mind that this truth,—and it is a most essential truth, —requires to be inculcated with such explanations and practical admonitions, as shall guard it against its being misunderstood, and most hurtfully misapplied. For, it may be so understood and applied as to lead to either of two contrary results;— to *carelessness*, or to the utmost *carefulness*, respecting practical morality.

On the one hand, if any person so understands the assertion that a genuine christian faith must always produce the fruit of christian holiness of life, as to conclude that his religion will *make* him a good man, without any study, or exertion, or

* καλα και ωφελιμα. Tit. iii.

care, on his part, as to his moral improvement,—that he has only to attend to the faith, and trust to the works following spontaneously,—such a one will consider himself, not, according to the Apostle's illustration, as one "striving" for the "Mastery,"* and prepared to "run with patience the race set before him," and resolved, through divine help, so to "run that he may obtain," but rather as a passenger who has embarked on board a ship, and who, if he have but been careful to fix on the right vessel, will be *carried* to the destined port without any further care, or any exertion on his part. And he will be in great danger of becoming one of those whom the same Apostle speaks of, who having "cast away a good conscience, concerning the faith have made shipwreck."† For, not having been, as Paul enjoins us, "*careful* to maintain good works," his moral defects will, instead of being corrected by his religion, have gradually corrupted his religion. His "mind and conscience

* 1 Cor. ix. † 1 Tim. i. 19.

will have been defiled,"* even as the pure rain from the heavens becomes tainted by being received in an impure vessel. The plant whose roots alone have received careful culture, and whose foliage and flowers have been left unheeded, will perhaps receive a fatal blight on these, which will work downwards through the stem, and gradually decay the roots themselves.†

On the other hand, one who so understands the inseparableness of a christian life from a genuine christian faith, as to consider the redeeming mercy of God in Christ as inciting us, and his promised aid by the Holy Spirit, as enabling us, to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," because trusting that "it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure"—such a one will become a fruitful branch of the "true Vine:" not, either a branch which cannot bear fruit, of itself, because

* Tit. i. 15.

† This is clearly and forcibly set forth in an *Ordination-Sermon*, published by the Rev. CADWALLADER WOLSELEY.

"not abiding in the Vine," nor again a barren branch which is "taken away" from the Vine, because it "beareth not fruit." And such a Christian will never lose sight of either portion of that most important admonition, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." He will *watch*, as if *every* thing depended on himself; and he will pray, as if *nothing* depended on himself.

THE END.

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